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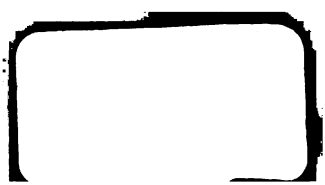

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TRAVELS

IN

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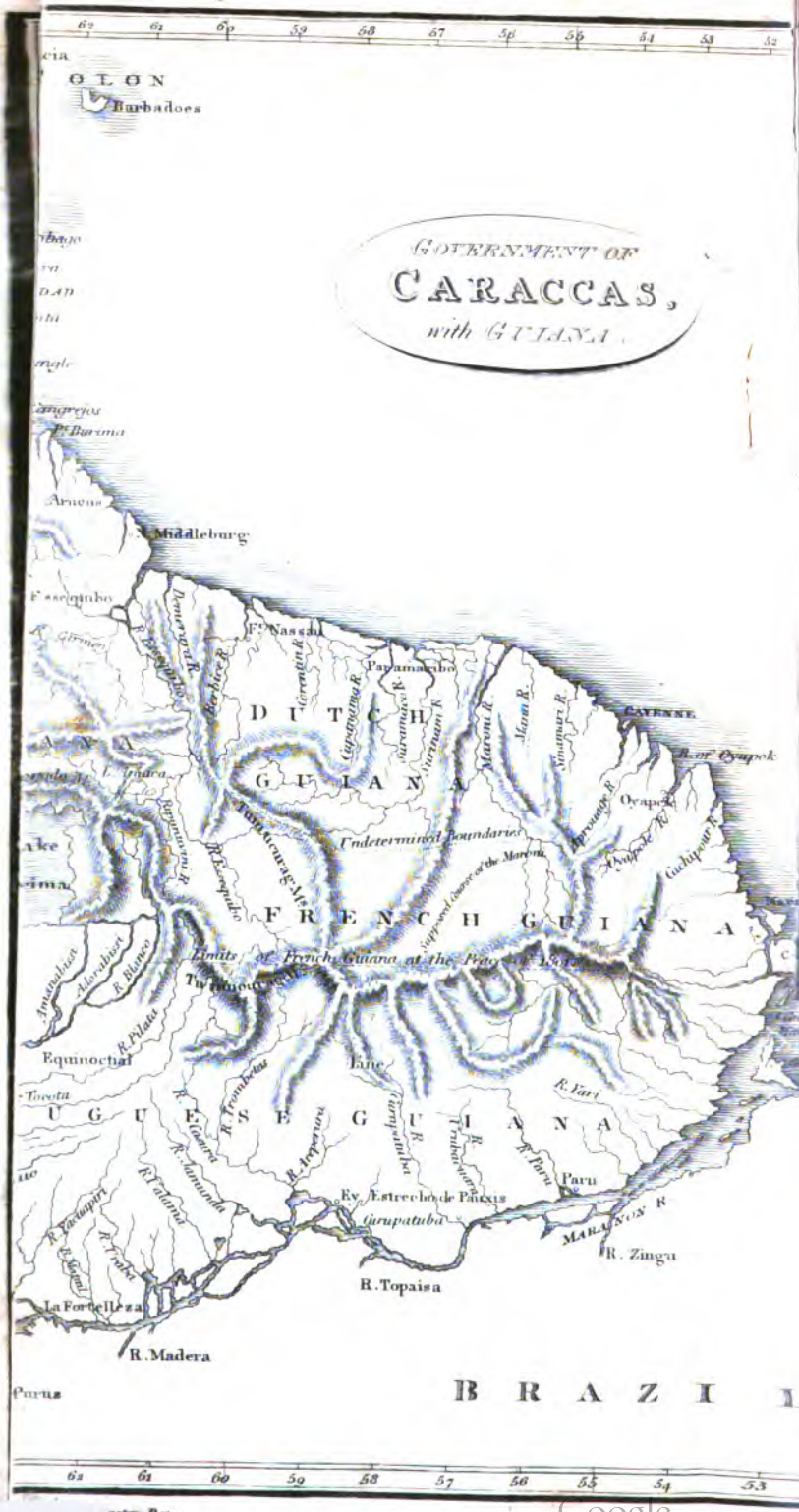

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TRAVELS

IN

SOUTH AMERICA,

DURING

THE YEARS 1801, 1802, 1803, AND 1804;

CONTAINING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARACCAS, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY, CONQUEST, TOPOGRAPHY, LEGISLATURE, COMMERCE, FINANCE, AND NATURAL PRODUCTIONS OF THE COUNTRY;

WITH A

VIEW OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

OF THE

SPANIARDS AND THE NATIVE INDIANS.

BY F. DEPONS,

LATE AGENT TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AT CARACCAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1807.

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INTRO-

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Work which I here lay before the public has no foundation but truth, nor any ornament besides its accuracy. My object in entering upon this undertaking was, to place in the Annals of Geography and Politics countries hitherto unknown, wherein Nature scatters her favours with a liberal hand, and displays all her magnificence, unseen by the rest of the world.

I hesitate not to maintain, that no part of America, whatever be its situation, can be compared, in point of fertility of soil and variety, and richness of production, with those countries which compose the captain-generalship of Caraccas; that is to say, with the provinces of Venezuela, Varinas, Maracaïbo, Cumana, Spanish Guiana, and the Island of Margaretta, which extend from 12° north latitude to the equator, and from 62° to 75° west longitude from the meridian of Paris.

I call this country by the new name of *The Eastern Part of Terra-Firma*, in order to distinguish it from the more Western part of

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that country, which is dependent on the Vice-royalty of Santa Fé, and which is bounded to the north-east by Cape de la Vela, and on the west by the isthmus of Panama.

All kinds of colonial produce, without exception, are raised in this *land of promise* in much greater quantities than in any of the Antilles; and the quality of them is infinitely superior. It is well known that the cacao of Caraccas sells for double the price of that of any of the islands in the Gulph of Mexico, St. Domingo itself not excepted. It sells for fifteen or twenty per cent. more than the cacao which is raised in the very same latitude, on the banks of the celebrated river Magdalena, which traverses a great part of the new kingdom of Grenada, and empties itself into the sea in the neighbourhood of Carthagena. The cacao of Guayaquil, on the shores of the Pacific, nearly under the equator, is not worth more than one half of that of Caraccas and its dependencies.

The indigo of the eastern part of Terra-Firma yields only to that of Guatimala. The difference amounts only to eight or ten per cent. The tobacco cultivated and manufactured in these provinces is worth twice as much as the best which is raised in the United States. This single commodity, which is sold on the king's account, produces near four mil-

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lions annually to the public treasury. The sugar and coffee are here much finer than in any other part of the torrid zone, notwithstanding art has done much less on their behalf than it might have effected.

Besides the above colonial commodities, the soil of the eastern part of Terra-Firma offers to the inhabitants an infinitude of other productions, adapted for commercial purposes; and this, too, without requiring from them any thing in advance, or subjecting them to any trouble besides that of gathering them, and giving them a slight and easy preparation.

In this numerous class we may place—1. Vanilla, produced from a creeping plant which, like the wild vine and ivy, entwines round the trees. It is worth about one hundred francs a pound. It grows in great plenty in the forests of St. Philip and Truxillo, on the banks of the Tuy. This plant requires uncultivated and moist grounds, which are covered with large trees.

The province of Venezuela alone, notwithstanding the little attention paid to its cultivation, might raise upwards of ten thousand pounds weight of it a year; and the quantity might soon be doubled by a little additional industry. To multiply the number of this valuable plant, nothing more is necessary than to insert some cuttings in the earth near a tree;

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they soon take root, and entwine about it with a firm hold. A surer but less convenient method to prevent the decay of the plant is to graft the cuttings in the tree itself, about twenty inches above the ground.

This interesting article of trade is to the inhabitants of Terra-Firma little more than an object of mere curiosity. They do not sell above two hundred pounds weight of it in the year. The whole that is gathered is intended for presents to be sent to Spain to their parents or their patrons, by the agents of the government, and those who are soliciting employments. The rest is suffered to perish on the trees, or to be devoured by the monkies, who are very fond of it. The little that is gathered receives, besides, but a very imperfect preparation, the defect of which occasions it to lose the superiority which by nature it possesses over that of Mexico.

2. Wild Cochineal may be placed in the same list with Vanilla. It grows in Terra-Firma, —and in great quantities in the departments of Coro, Carora, and Truxillo. It is only used for dyeing, and that merely in the parts where it is raised. The result of their own trials has never inclined the inhabitants to introduce it as an article of commerce. In order to estimate its value, we need only apply to it the processes specified in a Memoir lately published at Paris, by M. Bruley, a planter as remarka-

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ble for the number of his ingenious observations as for the accuracy and happy results of his experiments.

3. This country might also be made to furnish the dyer with a variety of woods, barks, and plants, calculated to produce lively and permanent colours. None of these articles, however, constitute any part of their commerce, because they are not offered for sale; although the advantage derived from them on the spot, affords a favourable earnest of what might be expected from them in manufacturies. Maracaïbo is almost the only port from which a little brazil-wood is exported. The dyers of Europe might be made tributary to the eastern part of Terra-Firma in upwards of five hundred thousand francs a year, without the least prejudice or injury to the cultivation of the other productions.

4. Gums, resins, balsam, and medicinal oils, would make a conspicuous figure in commerce, were it not for the carelessness of the inhabitants, who prefer the sweets of indolence and repose to the prospect of future benefit. The departments of Coro, Carora, Tocuyo, and Upper Guiana, contain much dry land, which Nature has covered with aromatic plants, to indemnify them for the obstacles it has interposed to their producing such commodities as require a greater degree of moisture.

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5. It would carry me too far, or, to speak more properly, it would be impossible for me, to specify all the herbs, roots, and barks, which the eastern part of Terra-Firma offers for medicinal purposes. They are innumerable, and lie scattered in the different provinces in such situations as are most congenial to their growth. The quantity of sarsaparilla raised here exceeds the consumption of the whole of Europe. Sassafras and liquorice abound principally in the neighbourhood of Truxillo; squills are found on the sea beach of Lagunetas; storax in the jurisdiction of Coro; cassia almost every where: gayac is found on the coast; aloes are raised in the jurisdiction of Carora; a species of quinguina is obtained on the mountains, &c. &c.

6. It is worthy of observation, that there are few or no trees found in the numerous and extensive forests of the eastern part of Terra-Firma, which are not adapted for some purposes of utility. They either produce fruit, or are selected either for their hardness, their bulk, or their height, to be applied to all the various uses for which wood is employed. Upwards of twenty species of trees are found here, adapted for the most delicate inlaid work; and they have a richness and variety of colouring, which, when brought forth by polishing, renders the goods or furniture manufactured from them much more beautiful than any which the

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most skilful cabinet-makers can produce from the finest and richest grained mahogany. Among these trees there is one, called by the natives chacarandy, which surpasses all the others in beauty. It is found on the mountains of Periga, in the province of Maracaïbo. One half of Europe might procure from the forests of Terra-Firma all the wood they might require for building, or for the manufacture of their ornamental furniture. It is true, indeed, that all the trees do not admit of being exported with equal ease, on account of their distance from the sea, and from navigable rivers; but there are, nevertheless, a sufficient number of them near enough to be exported, to the annual amount of several millions of dollars.

7. The commerce of this country might derive considerable increase from the animal kingdom, provided the government and the inhabitants were only to devote their attention seriously to the subject. My chapter on Commerce points out how greatly the mass of exported goods is indebted to this branch of local wealth. In order to enable my reader to complete his estimate, it only remains that I state farther, that the provinces of Venezuela, Barcelona, Spanish Guiana, the western borders of the lake Maracaïbo, &c. contains upwards of one million two hundred thousand horned cattle, one hundred and eighty thousand horses,

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and ninety thousand mules, dispersed over the plains and the vallies. Sheep are innumerable, and deer very plentiful, particularly in the jurisdictions of Coro, Carora, and Tocuyo. The produce of this branch of commerce may be estimated at five millions of francs, including the proceeds of live animals exported to the neighbouring colonies, and the produce of deer skins and hides sold for home consumption.

From this sketch, in which I have rather under-rated than exaggerated the advantages held out to the inhabitants, it will be seen, that there are few countries in which Nature has been more prodigal of her favours than that I am describing. Mexico and Peru must, in the estimation of every politician or reasonable man, lose by a comparison; for, as I have had frequent occasion to observe, the mines, which are daily sinking in value, are very far from promising the commerce and the shipping of the mother-country such advantages as may be safely expected from commodities which are every year renewed, and which ages will only serve to increase.

Notwithstanding all this, however, a country wherein all the elementary sources of the greatest prosperity are united, wherein Agriculture lavishes her treasures, and the soil every where yields such productions as are suited to the different temperatures occasioned by the inequali-

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ties and various elevations and depressions of its surface; in a word, a country inhabited by a population of seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand persons, is almost unknown to the literary and the commercial world. No Spanish writer has ever described it; and the accounts which have been given of it by the most celebrated modern geographers, have been so imperfect and inaccurate, that it would have been better for them to have been entirely silent upon the subject.

"The province of Venezuela, or Little Venice," says M. Montelle, "is so called, because the principal place is but a little elevated above the level of the water." (*Cours de Cosmographie, &c.* tome 3, p. 520, edit. de 1801.) The chief place of the province of Venezuela has never been nearly on a level with the water. The city of Coro, built upon an arid soil, was the seat of government from the time of its foundation in 1527 to the year 1576, when the governor, Pimentel, removed his residence to Caraccas, which is at least sixty toises above the level of the sea, and which has no other water than that of three brooks which pass rapidly through it, and of a small river which bounds it on the south. The name of Venezuela, which is in Spanish a diminutive of Venice, was given to this province on account of some Indian villages which the first conquerors found on the

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lake of Maracaïbo. Three of these are still found there, and owe their existence to circumstances which I have explained in my description of the lake.

In the following page of the same volume, M. Montelle mentions a province under the name of Oronoko, "which," he observes, "takes its appellation from the great river which runs through it." I am perfectly acquainted with all the countries washed by the river Oronoko, and I venture to affirm that there is not any province on its banks known by that name. From the situation assigned to it by M. Montelle, it is more than probable that he meant to describe Spanish Guiana; since, according to him, the whole of Guiana is divided between the French and the Dutch, while, in fact, the Portuguese possess all that part of it which is bordered on the south by the river Amazons, on the north by the French possessions, and on the northwest by Spanish Guiana. That part of Guiana which is situated between the river Oronoko and the Dutch possessions, belongs to the Spaniards. It extends from the mouth of the Oronoko to its source; that is to say, for upwards of six hundred leagues to the south-west. It was the wish of the Spanish government, to give to their possessions to the southward of the Oronoko, when they made the conquest of them, the name of New Andalusia, but the

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Indian name of Guiana has prevailed; and for upwards of a century they have not been known by any other appellation than that of *Spanish Guiana*.

"The river Oronoko," M. Montelle farther observes, "rises among the cordilleras of Peru, and discharges itself into the sea by four mouths." The Oronoko takes its rise in the neighbourhood of the lake Parima, and, after a course of upwards of five hundred leagues, empties itself into the sea by *fifty* mouths, of which seven are navigable channels.

The author of the New Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Geography, printed at Lyons, in 1804, charges Vosgien with a crowd of errors; but he is himself far from accurate in his account of the eastern part of Terra-Firma. For example: In his division of South America he includes the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaïbo, Cumana, and Guiana, in the kingdom of Grenada, although they have been separated from it for upwards of seventy-five years. Since that period they have together formed the jurisdiction of the Captain-general of Caraccas, who acknowledges himself subordinate to no other authority than that of the king himself. According to this writer, "The name of Venezuela was given to this district because Alphonso Ojeda, having landed there in 1499, caused some huts to be constructed upon poles, in order to ele-

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vate them above the stagnant water which covered the plain." It is true that Alphonso Ojeda, in 1499, visited the eastern shore of Terra-Firma; he landed at Maracapana, one hundred and fifty leagues to the eastward of the lake from which this country has been called Little Venice. He bartered his cargo for the gold and the pearls of the Indians, and afterwards coasted Terra-Firma as far as Cape dé la Vela, whence, according to some authors, he returned to Maracapana; or, according to others, sailed for St. Domingo: but he never dreamed of erecting any huts on Terra-Firma, much less of erecting them over its stagnant waters. The first settlement of the Spaniards on the borders of the lake of Maracaïbo was in 1527; they owed their establishment there to the care and conciliatory manners of John Ampues, of whom some notice is taken in the first chapter of the following Work.

Under the article Cumana, in the same Dictionary, it is stated, that "Americus Vespucius discovered the coasts of this province in 1498; and that Ojeda landed there the year following." Americus Vespucius and Alphonso Ojeda made two voyages in company, but none separately, to Terra-Firma. The first was in 1499;—and they were undertaken solely in consequence of the account which Columbus had transmitted to the Court of Spain of his discovery of it the

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preceding year. This is the account which is given by the best Spanish writers, and which is on record in the archives of the country. It is the more necessary to expose this anachronism, as it tends to nothing less than to rob Columbus of the honour of the discovery, and to sanction the surreptitious claim of the impostor Vespucius. M. Aynés, the compiler of the Dictionary above quoted, states that the Spaniards derived tobacco and pearls from the province of Cumana, and a large quantity of silver from that of Caraccas. It is now upwards of fifty years since there has been a pearl fishery on this coast; tobacco is cultivated and sold there solely on the king's account. Caraccas, and the provinces dependent upon it, having no mines at work, had nothing but produce to give in exchange for European commodities. The money obtained for these articles of produce composed the whole of their circulating specie.

The article relating to Guiana is that which approaches nearest the truth; it contains only two errors worthy of notice. The author places the northern boundary of Dutch Guiana at the mouth of the Oronoko; whereas this boundary has been fixed by different treaties at Essequibo, forty leagues to the southward of that river. But the Dutch have removed it eight or ten leagues farther north. M. Aynés states also, that Spanish Guiana forms a part of the government

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of Cumana. Since 1764, however, Guiana has had a government of its own, and its jurisdiction is wholly independent of that of Cumana, and separated from it by the river Oronoko.

The *Universal Dictionary of Commercial Geography*, printed in 5 volumes, in quarto, in the eighth year of the Republic (1799), which is, without exception, the first commercial work ever published, and contains almost all the information which can be desired by the geographer, the politician, or the merchant, relative to any part of the world, contains only such imperfect accounts of Terra-Firma as serve to detract from the merit of a publication in other respects so valuable and important.

"Caraccas," it is here stated, "is a coast and city of South America, in Terra-Firma, in the province of Venezuela." It might and ought to have been added, that it has been for upwards of two hundred years not only the capital of that province, but also the metropolis of the Captain-generalship, the seat of the Royal Audience, and of the Intendancy, whose authority extends over the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaïbo, Varinas, Cumana, Guiana, and the island of Margaretta. "Plantains and Indian corn are grown there; it contains also fowls and hogs."—This description, which is characteristic of a country whose scarcity denies subsistence to its inhabitants, or affords it with dif-

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ficulty, is unjust, when applied to the province of Venezuela, whose fertile soil yields, with prodigal liberality, all the productions which are to be met with in the West India Islands, besides many others which they do not possess. In no part of the world is man less straitened for the means of subsistence than in this province. If he labour, he will grow rich, and if he vegetate merely in indolence and sloth, he has only to stoop in order to gather from the soil more than sufficient to satisfy the wants of nature.

" But the principal article which these vallies produce, and indeed, to speak the truth, the only marketable commodity, is the cacao nut, from which chocolate is made. It is from this country that the Dutch derive the greater part of the cacao which they import into Europe. This fruit is almost the only commodity exported from this coast, of which the principal town is La Guira, the same, no doubt, as Goayra (Guayra). Hides also are procured here, and considerable quantities of silver, which is, indeed, an article of commerce that can only be smuggled by foreigners. The English, however, from Jamaica, and the Dutch from Curaçoa, carry away annually great quantities of both, as well as of cacao, particularly of the latter, for which they every year send several ships of thirty or forty tons burthen."

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This account, published in the eighth year of the Republic, (1799) wears the appearance of being a century old; for at that distance of time, as the ships of the mother country did not frequent the ports of Terra-Firma, it was, indeed, the Dutch of Curaçoa who purchased their commodities, and sold them European merchandise in return. It is also true that at that date cacao, hides, and tobacco were the only articles which the province of Venezuela afforded for traffic; but it has never afforded silver in *considerable quantities;* as the King of Spain has been obliged to remit there every year all the silver coin necessary to defray the expences of the government. This supply was sent there direct from Mexico.

Since the year 1728 the productions of the province of Venezuela have been conveyed by direct channels to the mother country. For this advantage the inhabitants were indebted to the care and superintendance of the Guipuscoa Company, whose exclusive privilege continued as low down as the year 1780. During this interval, the English and the Dutch could only carry on a contraband traffic; and that even not in a direct way. It was prosecuted by means of some Spanish smugglers, who went clandestinely to Jamaica, Curaçoa, and Trinidad, to purchase dry goods, for which they paid, not cacao, but money, the money which consti-

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stuted the excess or balance which remained in favour of the provinces, in their authorised trade and exchange of commodities against the merchandise of Europe. Since this period, too, other articles have been cultivated in the province of Venezuela; and at this time cacao does not constitute one fourth part of its productions. All this will be farther shewn in the chapter on commerce.

According to the Dictionary of Commercial Geography, "The province of Cumana is dependent on the Royal Audience of St. Domingo." It is now twenty years since this was the case. It was rendered independent of its jurisdiction immediately on the establishment of the Royal Audience of Caraccas, in 1786.

The remainder of what is stated under the article Cumana is altogether different from the documents and the information I have been able to obtain. It is correct in nothing, but in the beauty and the delightfulness which it ascribes to this province; for, so far as relates to myself, I have not in any part of my travels heard any thing of the *Valley of Salma*, or of the *Mountains of San Pedro*, near the Oronoko. The only mountains of this name with which I am acquainted are situated five leagues to the south-west of Caraccas, one hundred leagues to the westward of the nearest borders of the pro-

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vince of Cumana, and at nearly an equal distance from the Oronoko.

"In the valley of Neyva," it is observed, in the same work, "Mines have for some years been worked with such success as not to disappoint the hopes of the proprietors, or renters, who have given us to understand that the whole of the country from Torayena to the Plata is filled with immense quantities of gold."

My inquiries give me some claim to assert that no mines, either of gold or silver, are worked in the province of Cumana, or any where within three hundred leagues of its borders. Nor, indeed, is there any valley in the province of Cumana that bears the name of Neyva. The only one so called, that is known in Terra-Firma, is on the banks of the river Magdalena, upwards of three hundred leagues from Cumana.

The article relating to Guiana is equally incorrect. This province is divided, according to this Dictionary, into French and Dutch Guiana. The Portuguese and Spanish possessions, which are six times the extent of those belonging to France and Holland, are passed over in silence.

I was sorry to find it stated, in the same publication, that Porto Rico had, during the last war, fallen into the hands of the English: the honour of the Spanish name requires that I rec-

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tify this mistake. Is is true that the English did, in 1798, make an attempt to obtain possession of this island. Its situation, its ports, and the fertility of its soil, rendered it to them so much an object of desire that they dispatched against it the most formidable armament that ever appeared in the West Indies. It was commanded by Abercrombie, the most eminent of the generals. A landing was effected, under the cover of the British squadron, on the coast to the eastward of the town. The heavy artillery was conveyed ashore, and the troops fortified their position at their leisure. General Abercrombie fixed his head-quarters in a country house belonging to the bishop, not far from the town.

While the preparations for attack were making, those for the defence of the place soon assumed a formidable appearance. The Spaniards were all equally fired with a desire of repulsing their invaders, and all swore to shed their blood in the defence of their country.

Four or five hundred Frenchmen, who had been cruising in those seas, and whose ships and prizes were at that time in the harbour of Porto Rico, formed themselves into a regiment, under the command of M. Paris, the French Commissary, and made an offer of their services to the Captain-general, who accepted them. They begged and obtained permission

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to be stationed at the fort, which was nearest the enemy. They then marched off in order of battle, amid the acclamations of the whole town. This fort, as might be supposed, was first attacked. The English artillery battered several breaches in it, and demolished all its breast-work; upon which the Captain-general issued orders for its evacuation, conceiving it to be no longer tenable. He received for answer, that the French would still maintain it, and justify the confidence which the Spaniards had reposed in them. They only required some bales of cotton to replace the breast-work which had been destroyed, and some supplies of provisions and ammunition. The firing was continued on both sides without interruption. The French had promised that the English should not pass that fort, unless over their bodies, and they kept their word. Their intrepidity so disconcerted the assailants that, judging of the difficulties they would have to encounter to obtain possession of the town, from those which they had experienced in taking the first and weakest advanced post, and being informed likewise that the Spaniards meditated a vigorous sortie against them, they determined precipitately to raise the siege, and left behind them all their heavy artillery, as pledges of their discomfiture.

It is impossible to express the marks of grati-

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tude which the Spaniards heaped upon the Frenchmen as they returned into the city, under the banner of victory. French and Spaniards embraced with the most cordial brotherly affection. The Frenchmen were hailed by the flattering appellation of the saviours of Porto Rico. This title was in some respects their due; but the English would not have had better fare from the Spaniards, had they advanced sufficiently near to them, than they received from the French. The Captain-general promised to inform the king how much the city was indebted to these bold auxiliaries. An account of this siege was published in the Madrid Gazette; but its limits did not probably allow of any mention being made of the Frenchmen. Posterity, however, shall know, (should my work survive) that the Commanding Officers, Baron and Barnard, covered themselves with glory in this memorable engagement.—But I resume my subject.

How comes it to pass that the political and commercial state of a country so extensive and rich, and at the same time so near to Europe, as Terra-Firma, should at this day be so little known, while regions more remote, and more difficult of access, have been described with all the minuteness which history could desire? Is it because the Spaniards are more strict than any other people in excluding from their fo-

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reign possessions all who are not of their own country? No stranger dares to set his foot on any of the Spanish possessions, particularly on the continent of America, much less to take up his residence there, without express permission from the King: and this it is not easy to obtain, unless for such excursions as have for their sole object the improvement of natural history. On the other hand, as there are no mines worked in the eastern part of Terra-Firma, no Spaniard has been found disposed to apply his talents and his labours to the description of a country which all the nation, eager only for the wealth of mines, regarded as an object of indifference.

Nothing short of the events which drove me to Terra-Firma could have secured for me the asylum I obtained there, but which, however, I have not been suffered to enjoy without some difficulties. But these I have overcome by the principles I have uniformly adopted as the rules of my conduct in foreign countries, which are, never to condemn any prejudices I find existing there, to respect the prevailing customs, and conform to the local manners of the place.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, let it not be supposed that I had not many obstacles to surmount before I could collect together the materials which were necessary for my purpose.

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The Spaniards are, literally speaking, beyond every other people jealous of inquisitive strangers. There are very few of them who will cordially assist his inquiries concerning their political and domestic economy; but there are many who, under the appearance of zeal and friendship, will, upon the most grave and important subjects, give as facts, relations the farthest removed from the truth. How often have I received as confidential communications, of which it appeared folly to question the veracity, the information, which I afterwards found to be false.

Without the residence of eight years, which I made in other parts of the Spanish territories, previous to my arrival in Terra-Firma; without a residence of nearly four years in the provinces I have described; without the means I employed to examine the public records and archives of the country; and without an adherence to the rule which I had tied myself down to observe, to submit every thing to the inspection of my own eyes, my researches and my labours would only have led me to conclusions rather injurious than beneficial to the sciences of geography and history.

But it is not sufficient to have collected together all the documents requisite for a faithful and accurate account, but it is also necessary to give them that methodical arrangement which

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may convey to the minds of my readers the impressions which my own received in travelling over and examining the eastern part of Terra-Firma. I flatter myself that the disposition I have made of my materials will be found to produce this effect.

The first chapter contains an account of the discovery and the conquest of the country. From the facts which are there detailed, it will be seen that the Spaniards established themselves in Terra-Firma much more slowly, if not with greater difficulty, than in any other part of America. This arose as much from the improper measures which they at first pursued, as from the preference which the Spaniards gave to Mexico and Peru, where their thirst for mines found ampler means of gratification.

To this chapter succeeds a concise description of the country, such as it was when the Spaniards formed their first settlements in it. I conceived it would be proper to give some account of the temperature of its climate, of the soil, of its indigenous productions, its forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, and harbours, before I proceeded to describe its institutions, and territorial riches, which pertain to the genius and the industry of the conquerors. All these subjects are considered in the second chapter.

The next chapter treats of the population, th European and African. I have in this ex-

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plained the methods adopted for making the annual estimate of the numbers of which each of these classes is composed; as well as shewn the rank which the laws assign to them in the community; the care exercised by the government of the mother country in preventing an emigration to the colonies, which would be excessive and injurious to its domestic interests; the strictness of the laws against the admission of strangers into the Spanish provinces; the manners of the Europeans, the manners and customs of the Creoles; and the condition of the slaves and of the freedmen.

The fourth chapter is wholly devoted to an account of the Indians. It was my wish not to confound this aboriginal population with that which succeeded, because it exhibited a sufficient number of peculiarities to entitle it to a separate description. I have derived, from local tradition, and from public monuments, such particulars respecting the form of their government before their subjugation, and their character and customs, as appear worthy of being submitted to public observation and reflection. The method which the laws have prescribed for weaning them from their forests, and conducting them to social life, is not destitute of interest. We behold here every thing that is most persuasive in morality, rendered altogether impotent and ineffectual by the natural

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aversion of the Indians to religious conduct and civilized manners. Their primitive customs have been transmitted among them from age to age, without undergoing hardly any change. Their timidity, their superstition, their proneness to inebriety, to incest, to lying, and to sloth, have resisted for upwards of a century and a half all the exertions of the missionaries to reform them. It is in vain you urge upon them a belief in the existence of a placable and merciful God, for they have faith only in the Devil. They form an example, happily of rare occurrence, of a people who do not admit a good principle, to counteract the evil. The slow steps with which they have advanced towards civilization, are the consequence of the extreme lenity with which the laws prescribe that they shall be treated. The laws rather encourage than controul their taste and their inclinations. Instead of reproof, they recommend the mild remonstrances of friendship: they seek to make them men by those means alone which are adapted only to perpetuate their childhood. The discussion of these points is concluded with the outlines of a new system, which would render them more useful both to the colonies and to the parent state.

In the fifth chapter will be found the system which Spain has legislated for her colonies; the ties which she has formed to bind them to her

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sovereignty; the prerogatives and functions of the royal deputies; the tribunals of justice, and general police; and the number, organization, and distribution, of the troops destined for the protection of the country. The colonial laws of Spain exhibit great foresight and profound wisdom. The regulations which she has adopted for maintaining her national sovereignty inviolate, and for preventing that abuse of authority which such a distance from the chief government induce, are so skilfully and admirably combined, that they may be regarded as a master-piece of legislation for the colonies of modern times, so far as concerns their political relations to the mother countries.

It must, indeed, be agreed that possessions, situated from two to five thousand leagues from the fountain of authority, five times the extent of the mother country, and containing a larger population, could not, for upwards of three centuries, have been maintained in constant and peaceable subjection, without giving full employment to the genius and the reflection of the legislator. I ascribe all the merit to the Council of the Indies, that supreme tribunal, where all violations of the laws, and all abuses of authority in Spanish America, are judged, and from which all the regulations, all the decrees relating to the government of the colonies, proceed. Europe does not furnish an example

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of another tribunal whose decisions have been, during three centuries, so luminous and wise as those which have resulted, and still continue to result, from the deliberations of this. During the whole of this long period, calumny has not dared to reproach its proceedings with any undue bias, or ignorance, or partiality.

Religion is too intimately connected with politics in the Spanish government to admit of being passed over unnoticed in the present publication. The jurisdiction of the tribunals of the inquisition, much more lenient and restrained than it formerly was; the authority of the Holy See, which, through the concessions of the first Popes, was reduced in the Spanish colonies to the mere privilege of giving a canonical form to the royal decrees; the powers of the king as patron of the Indies; the organization of the clergy; the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunals; the method of nominating to bishopricks, to prebendaries and cures; and, last of all, the functions of the Missionaries; are all of them objects of which the consideration can no less than interest the reader. This chapter is concluded with an examination of the delicate question respecting the propriety of allowing churches to be asylums for the protection of criminals.

The seventh chapter contains every thing which relates to agriculture. It opens with an

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account of the right which the Spanish monarch has assumed to himself of disposing of the lands of the new world; then follows an account of the mode in which the distribution of them has been successively made. I then proceed to an analysis of the soil of the eastern part of Terra-Firma, and of the different productions which are cultivated there. I have detailed at length all the particulars relative to the cultivation and manufacture, or preparation, of these productions, which a residence of two and twenty years have rendered familiar to me. This subject has been treated with so much care that it cannot but prove interesting to every modern colony. Lastly, I have examined the causes which have led to the decline of cultivation in Terra-Firma, and pointed out the means which appeared to me most proper for restoring to it that activity which it has recently lost.

Territorial productions necessarily give birth to commerce; the chapter on this latter subject, therefore, naturally follows that on the former. The commercial system pursued by Spain in regard to its colonies, obliges me to notice the various alterations it has undergone; and, to the honour of Spain, I am bold to assert, that this system, certainly vicious in its origin, has been gradually reformed in a manner the most advantageous to a mother country, which cannot supply its colonies with any commodities but

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those of foreign manufacture. Her imposts, apparently exorbitant, are, however, on reflection, found to be the effect neither of accident nor of ignorance, but the necessary result of the erroneous principle on which they were formed. Thirty years ago the fiscal laws underwent some modification, and made all the allowance in favour of trade, which could perhaps be reasonably expected. Besides its intercourse with the mother country, the eastern part of Terra-Firma carries on a very advantageous reciprocal trade with the other Spanish possessions in America; with Porto Rico, Cuba, Vera Cruz, Carthagena, St. Martha, and other places. The laws permit them also to export to the other colonies in the gulph of Mexico, the surplus of their animals, hides, and skins, drugs, and even other articles of produce besides cacao; in this traffic it is only necessary to obtain the permission of the Intendant, which is easily procured. I have next given some account of the contraband trade, which is also reduced to a system. These subjects form the contents of the eighth chapter, which is concluded by an account of the Consulat of Caraccas, and the rate of duties on importation and exportation.

In the ninth chapter I have brought together every thing that relates to the department of finance. It will be perceived that until 1728, the

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period when the company of Guipuscoa was formed, the resources of the eastern part of Terra-Firma were so limited, that Spain was obliged every year to remit money from Mexico for the payment of the troops, and the public functionaries; and, indeed, for all public expences whatever. In 1777 the finances of these provinces underwent an organization, which shews the importance which they had by that time acquired. The Captain-general of Caraccas was relieved from the charge of their superintendance, which was transferred to an Intendant. This regulation introduced new order, and communicated a high degree of lustre to the whole department. After having described the particular functions and prerogatives of the Intendant, and the officers of revenue, I have given an account of the origin and object of every impost established in these provinces, its assessment, the manner of collecting it, and its annual produce. This account is followed by a general table of receipts and payments.

I apprehend there are few readers who will not consider the subjects which I have detailed in the foregoing chapters, as embracing every thing which the historian could require; but the promise I have made not to omit any thing in my account of these interesting countries, induces me to add to these general representations such particular documents as are necessary

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to make known the various resources, and the particular objects of industry, possessed by the several parts of the Captain-generalship of Caraccas. This is what I had in view in the tenth chapter, nnder the head *Description of the Towns and their Dependencies.* I have pointed out not only the situation of every town, the temperature of its atmosphere, and its population, but also the character of its inhabitants, their industry, and their trade; the quality of the surrounding soil, the kind of productions which it yields spontaneously, and the commodities which it affords by cultivation; and the rivers which intersect it, &c. I have also shewn the manner in which the provinces of the eastern part of Terra-Firma are divided into cabildos, which are established in every town, whose jurisdiction extends over all the adjoining villages, as far as the limits of the next cabildos. A circumstantial description of the seat of each cabildo, and the territory over which its authority extends, will constitute the most complete and instructive topographical account which can be given of this country.

The eleventh chapter is wholly devoted to Spanish Guiana. I have there brought together into one view all that I had to say respecting this province, in order to make it more resorted to than it is at present, and to obtain for it the more readily that distinguished rank which it

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ought to hold among the most important possessions. Washed by the Oronoko, which traverses it for upwards of five hundred leagues, and receives in its course an immense number of considerable rivers, Spanish Guiana is destined by nature to be the most productive of the provinces of America, and the centre of commerce for the productions which itself affords, and for those of most of the neighbouring provinces, whose navigable streams flow into the Oronoko.

The navigation of this majestic river, whose vast body of water is at least equal to that of the Amazons, having hitherto been known only to a very small number of the pilots of the country, I have considered myself bound by the most imperious ties to explain it with every possible minuteness. I have begun by an account of the navigation of the upper part of it, as far as the capital of Guiana. This presents little that is interesting to commerce, because it is only carried on by the inhabitants of the country, who convey their commodities to St. Thomas. My attention and researches have, therefore, been principally directed to the long and dangerous navigation of the river from its mouth up to that town.

The Oronoko has fifty mouths, which are almost all of them deceitful; and it requires no small share of good fortune in the navigator who

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is unacquainted with them, to make his choice aright: the greater part of these entrances will only conduct him to a labyrinth, formed by an infinitude of islands, from which he will find it extremely difficult, even with the assistance of the compass, to extricate himself. Even the most navigable branch of the Oronoko has its difficulties. It will not admit ships of every tonnage; its bed, strewed with islands, shoals, and rocks, presents a series of impediments which nothing but practice can overcome. This chapter is not, however, the less interesting, since it communicates the information of which geography and navigation have stood in need, respecting a river of the first consequence. My account has therefore the merit of being the only one which has yet appeared; and I may venture to affirm that it has also the merit of accuracy. The map of the Oronoko, from its mouth to St. Thomas, was made by order of the king; and all the documents relating to this survey remain deposited in the office of the minister.

The English, whose views are all directed to commerce, are the only foreigners who possess as much information as the Spaniards themselves, respecting the navigation of the Oronoko, the Captain-generalship of Caraccas, and the other Spanish possessions, which they inundate with their contraband merchandise. Should I be so

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happy as to find a value set upon my labours proportioned to the trouble they have cost me, I shall regard the events which, on the eighteenth of January, 1801, threw me on the shores of Terra-Firma, as a favour of Heaven; —and in this case I should feel myself bound to declare that I am indebted to the General-in-Chief Le Clerc for a great part of my success.

As soon as he arrived at St. Domingo, at the head of the army sent to restore order in that island, I hastened to submit to him my observations on this colony, and to give him an account of my literary project. The part of his answer which relates to this last subject is dated 10th Thermidor, in the 10th year of the Republic (1802), and is couched in these terms :—

" I lament that the wants of the army under my command will not at this time permit me to apply the necessary sums to historical researches. The time is certainly not far distant when I shall be able to promote this object to the utmost of my wishes; in the mean time I beg your acceptance of one thousand dollars, which I have ordered to be paid to you. I hope this sum will enable you to prosecute your useful labours. I shall not fail to apprise the minister of the interior that there is a Frenchman on the American Continent engaged in such useful inquiries."

This pecuniary assistance, of which the la-

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mentable event of his death prevented the repetition, afforded me little encouragement beyond the consideration of the interest which the Commander-in-Chief took in my undertaking. His solicitation to continue my labours assured me that I should have a direct claim upon the gratitude of the government;—I needed nothing more to induce me to redouble my zeal, my industry, and application; and to sacrifice every thing to the accuracy, the clearness, and the precision, which ought to be found in the laborious and important description of these extensive and delightful countries.

TRAVELS

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TRAVELS

IN

SOUTH AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

The scientific knowledge and enterprising spirit of Columbus.—Intrepidity of the conquerors of America.—Discovery of Terra Firma by Columbus.—Ojeda and Americus Vespucius pursue his steps.—Origin of the Missionaries.—Two Missionaries go to exercise their ministry at Cumana.—Shocking occurrence which occasions their murder.—New Missionaries pass to Cumana, and are butchered there.—First military expedition to Cumana.—Second Expedition.—The Audience of St. Domingo send a Commissary to Coro.—Cession of the Province of Venezuela to the Welsers.—Ferocity of their agents.—The Welsers are dispossessed of it.—Encomiendas.—Their object.—Their utility.—Their constitution.—Their extinction.—Causes which occasioned force to be employed at Venezuela, and conciliatory measures to be abandoned.—Foundation of the first cities, Barquisimeto, Palmes the same as Nirgua, Truxillo, Caraccas, Maracaibe, Carora, St. Sebastian de los Reyes.

Scientific knowledge and enterprising spirit of Columbus.

THE discovery of America justly appears to us, as it will continue to do to the remotest posterity, a phenomenon, and its conquest a prodigy. Christopher Columbus, being well versed both in Astronomy and Cosmography, had judged from the configuration of the earth, as well as from the theory of the Antipodes, which was still classed among the doctrines of heresy, that the existence of another hemisphere was indispensably necessary to maintain the equilibrium of the globe. The surmises of the ancients opened a vast field to his meditations; his astronomical and geographical knowledge sup-

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plied what was wanting. Plato, Aristotle, Pliny and Strabo suggested to him the idea of the problem which his sagacity enabled him to solve, and the project which the love of glory impelled him to execute.

Envy, that gloomy rival of merit, has taken particular pains to detract from that of Columbus, by denying that great man such a portion of science and talents as would have enabled him to pursue the train of ideas which would have theoretically led him to suppose, that the old continent did not comprehend more than one half of the lands which composed the globe, and that the other half remained to be discovered in the west. Malevolence has proclaimed that Columbus never had any other indications of the western regions, than some reeds, trunks of trees, and heaps of grass, which by the impulse of the winds and currents were driven into the latitudes of Madeira and the Azores, and that he had no certainty of their existence but what he derived from the journals of a pilot of Andalusia, named Alphonso Sanchez de Huelva, who having been cast by a storm on the American coast, where he was unable to victual, steered his course to Madeira, where Columbus was then settled. Hunger and all the other inconveniences inseparable from so fatiguing a voyage, rendered this pilot and four men, to which his crew were reduced, so many skeletons, which all the attentions of a generous hospitality could not rescue from the hand of death. Columbus is said to have got possession of the papers of the pilot, who died at his house, and to

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have formed the project of his future fortune upon the misfortunes of this navigator.

Admitting as facts, what justice and impartiality consider but as doubtful allegations, is not the execution alone of so bold a project sufficient to immortalize the name of the great man who undertook it?—To commit his life and fortune to unknown seas, upon the faith of the compass as yet imperfect; to perceive without discouragement a variation which no person had hitherto observed in the magnetic needle; to brave the discontent, the murmurs, the menaces of the timid companions of his enterprise; to announce, at the very moment when it was most seasonable, lands, the existence of which had been always at least problematical, is the greatest effort of that genius and intrepidity which smiles at obstacles, and of that perseverance which inflexibly bears up against every reverse. A man of this character will never pass for an ordinary man; and a discovery of this description will ever bear the stamp of what is great and admirable in human conduct. Accordingly, the year 1492, when the inhabitants of the two hemispheres held the first interview, will form one of the most memorable epochas in the annals of the world. If the invasion of the new world had been founded upon any just principles; if the horrors of a war waged against peaceful nations were not repugnant to reason and justice; if a yoke imposed upon free and inoffensive men, who had neither ambition nor power to excite fear, were not an outrage committed upon humanity, and a flagrant violation of the law of nations, the conquerors of America would merit the glory of

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being enrolled among the demi-gods, with juster pretensions to support them than the heroes of antiquity could boast, even if fiction should have forborne to exercise the privilege which belongs to her of exaggerating both facts and virtues.

The day will certainly come, when the account will appear fabulous which states, that 120 Spaniards having embarked in three small vessels bound from Europe to America, a quarter of the world then unknown, landed in the island of St. Domingo, inhabited by 1,500,000 Caribes; that they took possession of it in the name of his Spanish majesty; that they constructed fortifications; that, without any considerable reinforcement, or even common expense, they succeeded not only in the establishment of the Spanish sovereignty, but even in the total extermination of the inhabitants.

Whatever may be the weight of historical testimony, yet when it becomes destitute of every support but that of a confused tradition, it will be difficult to persuade people, that Cortez, at the head of 508 soldiers and 109 mariners and workmen, of whom 13 only were armed with muskets, and 32 with arquebusses, had the courage to invade, and that he actually reduced, a country defended by 6,000,000 of inhabitants, enjoying the advantages of an established government, and military discipline.

When a series of revolving ages shall have veiled in the obscurity of time the particulars of the conquest of America, will the credit, I do not say of truth, but of possibility, be granted to the conquest of the

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great empire of Peru by 180 Spaniards commanded by Pizarro?

But successes so astonishing lose much of their lustre, when we enter upon the detail of the operations of the conquerors. It is true that Spain was evidently too weak to add America to her dominions by regular warfare, with a population twenty times greater than her own, and an extent of territory equal or superior to that of the whole continent of Europe. Besides, the Spaniards of that period, unambitious of the glory of conquering, but excessively fond of riches, left the task of conquest to a very small number, and did not frequent the scenes of danger till the rumour of the gold and silver, there discovered, had excited their cupidity.

While the dangers and the toils were encountered by the daring and the fool-hardy, all the advantages were seized by that motley crew of blood-suckers with which every nation swarms. The handful of conquerors were obliged to supply the deficiency of number by artifice and cunning; falsehood, perjury, cruelty, ferocity, the excitement of civil war among the unhappy people whom they wished to subjugate, were the arms which they constantly employed; but all these means derived their efficacy from the courage, valour, intrepidity and perseverance of the conquerors. In the midst of crimes, which were said to be indispensable, we distinguish traits capable of reflecting honour upon human nature. Their conduct presents an assemblage of virtues and vices, which excite successively in the reader sensations of admiration and of horror.

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The heart is alternately dilated and contracted in contemplating a series of actions, in which there is a most extraordinary mixture of the admirable and the horrible, of the generous and the ferocious, the faithful and the perfidious.

My undertaking does not admit of pursuing the steps of all those astonishing men. It is confined to what respects the eastern part of Terra Firma and Spanish Guiana.

Of all the conquests which have been atchieved in the new world, in the name of the Spanish monarch, that of the parts of which we are now treating was the longest, the most difficult, and, we may add, the most imperfect. The mountains with which this country is covered, the multitude of rivers, whose inundations interrupt communications for a great part of the year; its lakes, marshes, and deserts, opposed difficulties, which only men violently urged by ambition could brave. But what must have still more contributed to retard the progress of the conquerors, in several parts of America, was the multiplicity of Indian governments, which not being incorporated so as to form one nation, like those of Mexico and Peru, rendered the victories of the Spaniards less decisive, and their negotiations more difficult. Every cacique waged a separate war, a war of stratagem and ambuscade; the caciques seldom entered into leagues, and seldomer still either offered or received battle in the open field. A conquered nation gave sometimes no more than four leagues of additional territory to the conquerors; the country was disputed by inches, and its conquest effected

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by dint of courage, patience, privations and dangers.

Discovery of Terra Firma by Columbus.

Terra Firma was not discovered until the year 1498, and that glory too was reserved for Christopher Columbus. This was the third voyage he made from Spain to America. His intention was to advance to the south as far as the equator; but the calms prevented him, and he was carried by the currents to the *Mouths of the Dragons*, situated between the island of Trinidad and Terra Firma. Lopez de Gomara maintains that Columbus discovered all the coast as far as Cape de Vela; but Oviedo, whose testimony I have learnt to respect, from the character which has been given me of his accuracy by his own countrymen, asserts that Columbus did not sail along the coast of Terra Firma, farther than the point of Araya, which is nearly due south of the westernmost point of Margaretta, from which he steered to the northward in order to make St. Domingo. Don Fernando Columbus, son of the admiral, says that his father, after having discovered the gulph of Paria, coasted along Terra Firma as far west as the Testigo Islands, from which point he sailed with a fair wind to St. Domingo; an account which too nearly corresponds with what is related by Oviedo, not to consign the assertion of Lopez de Gomara to the list of blunders which are so frequent in his work.

Ojeda and Americus Vespucius follow his track.

In consequence of the account which Columbus

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gave the Spanish court, of the discovery of that part of Terra Firma, of the manners of the inhabitants with whom he had had communications, and of the riches which he had observed, of which pearls constituted the chief part, the government granted Captain Alphonso Ojeda permission to pursue the discovery. Americus Vespucius, who enjoys a celebrity usurped from Columbus, interested himself in this armament, and resolved upon a voyage to America, yielding rather to the impulse of interest than of glory. Ojeda arrived in twenty-five days at the territory of Maracapana in the year 1499. He followed the coast as far as Cape de la Vela, entering into several ports in order to collect more minute information. From Cape de la Vela he sailed for St. Domingo, according to Oviedo and Robertson; but according to Charlevoix, he returned before that to Maracapana, a village situated upon the coast of Cumana, where he had a brig built.

Americus Vespucius, on his return to Spain, found means to persuade his countrymen, that the actual discovery of America was due to himself, since Columbus had only discovered some islands, which were to be considered as merely its avenues. His imposture at first passed for truth; his name was given to the new world, which it continues to retain, notwithstanding the efforts of history to restore that honour to Columbus.

Spanish vessels go to trade there.

Not long after, the account which Columbus

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had given to the Spanish government attracted to Terra Firma another vessel from Spain, whose real object was commerce, but which concealed its design under a permission from the king to prosecute the discovery of the country. This vessel commanded by Christopher Guerra, touched on the coast of Paria, at Margaretta, Cubagua and Cumanagola, now called Barcelona. In these places, in exchange for trinkets, he obtained a great quantity of pearls, gold, Brazil wood, &c. of which he formed a very rich cargo. Guerra pursued his course along the coast to the westward, and landed only at Coro, where he found, to his great astonishment, some Indians, as much disposed to take away from him whatever he had got, as those on the eastern coast had been to give them to him. He had too much to lose to run the risk of a war by which neither glory nor emolument was to be acquired. He, therefore, wisely took the resolution of returning to Spain, in order to place his riches out of the reach of danger.

The report of his arrival and fortune spread over the whole kingdom, and immediately from every part expeditions were fitted out for Terra Firma. At the same time, Charles the Fifth gave permission to make slaves of the Indians who should impede or embarrass the conquest; a grant so much the more deplorable to humanity, as it strongly excited the avarice of those in whose breasts money usurped the place of every other consideration. It is easy to imagine, that upon those coasts, where pillage had nothing to fear either from the vigilance of the ma-

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gistrate, or the sword of justice, there must have been established a nefarious commerce which had no other object than insatiable avarice, no other result but rapacity, tyranny and ferocity. The crimes committed by that swarm of robbers, who contended with one another for superiority in feats of plunder, were so great and so numerous, that the cries of the victims reached the audience of St. Domingo, who are entitled to our applause for having immediately taken measures to make it appear to the inhabitants of the new world, whom they wished to lead rather than to drive into obedience, that the enormities of that scum of the Spanish nation, were not properly chargeable on the nation itself. The audience sent thither, in quality of commissary and governor, a man of very great merit, named John Ampues, who arrived on the Coriana coast in 1527, with 60 men. But before I take a view of his administration, chronological order obliges me to make a digression in favour of Cumana.

Origin of the Missionaries.

It is well known that it was only by dint of repeated solicitation and perseverance, that Columbus was able to prevail on the Spanish court to patronize his project of discovery; so difficult was it to persuade them that the regions which he announced were not altogether imaginary. Ferdinand himself thought that he consulted his dignity by declining to subscribe, as king of Arragon, the treaty that was concluded at St. Fee, the 1st of April 1492, between

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their majesties and Columbus. Isabella, being the only person who had suffered herself to be, I will not say, convinced, but dazzled, had likewise engaged to defray from her own private purse, the expenses of the expedition; and it is by virtue of that clause, that the ports of America were, for a long time, exclusively opened to the subjects of Castile, and shut to those of Arragon. It was by no means surprising, then, that no examination had been instituted respecting the rights which an European king might assert over America, when its very existence was still a subject of doubt and controversy; but ideas, opinions, projects, and measures, must have undergone a total revolution after the event had proved the reality of what had hitherto been considered as visionary. Ferdinand and Isabella, unable to justify to the world the usurpation of countries discovered, and to be discovered, endeavoured to reconcile themselves, at least to their own conscience, by converting it into a right under the sanction of the visible head of the universal church. They engaged to propagate the faith among the inhabitants of the new world, and to make regions, till then unknown, a new domain of the Christian religion. Alexander I. yielding, as some think, to these motives, or, as others conceive, to political reasons, confirmed by a bull the demand of the Spanish monarchs. From that time these conquests were regarded rather as crusades, than military expeditions. The government ardently embraced a system, which they have never abandoned, not to employ force against the Indians till every moral and persuasive means had been tried in

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vain. It has always been the desire of the Spanish monarchs, that their conversion to Christianity should precede their subjugation. In consequence of this plan, which has never been violated, but without the knowledge, and against the will of the king, Columbus, in his second voyage, carried with him two friars, in order to sow the first seeds of the faith in the island of St. Domingo. These ministers of the God of peace, and those who succeeded them, were rarely seconded, but very often thwarted by the civil and military authorities. Inconvenient witnesses of the malversation of the Spaniards, whom the thirst of gold had attracted to the new world, they became objects of hatred to all who abused authority. Guilt, always bold, hastened to accuse timid innocence. The missionaries were often obliged to vindicate themselves against absurd accusations, the real object of which was to keep back the charges which they might raise against their accusers.

Two Missionaries go to exercise their Ministry at Cumana.

All these obstacles suggested to Father Cordoue the idea of requesting permission of the king, to go and preach the gospel in those parts of America, where the Spaniards might not yet have penetrated; which he obtained. He chose for this experiment the coast of Cumana. Unable to undertake the mission himself, he deputed in his stead the fathers Francis Cordoue, his brother, and John

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Garces. The order of the king to the governor of the Spanish island expressly insisted upon his favouring this apostolic mission. Accordingly, it was executed with becoming promptness and punctuality.

These friars repaired in 1512 to the place of their destination, without any arms, but those of morality, without any safeguard, but that of providence. Under these happy auspices they commenced their apostolic labours. The Indians, naturally mild, at least much more so than those who were found in the western part of the same coast, beheld in the missionaries beings of a divine nature, whose counsels they scrupulously observed, and whose wishes they executed with submission. Every thing announced that this mission would be crowned with the happiest and most rapid success, when a disastrous event blasted at once those flattering expectations.

An infamous occurrence which occasions their being murdered.

One of those ships belonging to St. Domingo, which for twelve years committed every kind of robbery and piracy upon these coasts, landed at Cumana. The friars, thinking that this vessel had come to carry on fair trade, embraced this opportunity of forming a friendly intercourse between the Spaniards and the Indians. The natives gave the captain and his crew the most kind and honourable reception, and hospitable entertainment, and gave fêtes in celebration of this mutual profession of amity and friendship. The Indians, unwilling to disappoint

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the wishes of the missionaries, were lavish in bestowing upon the Spaniards marks of the most perfect cordiality. Under pretence of making a suitable return for these unequivocal demonstrations of sincere attachment, the Spaniards invited the cacique, his wife, and seventeen Indians, to dine on board their ship. The invitation was gratefully accepted; but these unfortunate creatures were no sooner on board than the ship sailed for the island of St. Domingo. This act of rapine, which combined all that is most odious in perfidy, or most horrible in villany, became the signal of an immediate revolt among the Indians, and of a decree of death against the poor friars. They reproached them, with apparent reason, with having been the cause, or, at least, the intermediate instruments, of that detestable outrage. Nor is this to be wondered at; for how could savages be made to understand, that all the men of one nation, to which they are strangers, have not, like animals of the same species, the same habits, the same inclinations, the same blemishes, the same qualities, in short, a common uniform type. All that the remembrance of the great veneration with which they were lately regarded, could operate in their favour, was a respite of four moons, in order to procure from St. Domingo the return of the Indians who were carried off from Cumana. Their pardon depended upon the success of this negotiation. They wrote to the audience in the strongest terms. All the friars of St. Domingo earnestly solicited for their being returned; but to no purpose. The members of the audience had

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themselves become accomplices in the crime, and it was necessary they should possess more integrity than any of those who at that time came to enrich themselves in America, to be capable of pronouncing the sentence of their own condemnation. As soon as the four moons were expired, Cordoue and Garces were butchered in cold blood by the Indians. Some time elapsed before the Indians of Cumana had any intercourse with the Spaniards. It was not till the year 1516, that three Dominicans had the courage to pass from the island of Cubagua, where the Spaniards carried on the pearl-fishery, to Terra Firma. But the moment they landed they became the victims of their zeal, and were devoured by the Cannibals, whom they wished to convert.

New Missionaries pass to Cumana and are butchered there.

The news of their death far from discouraging this class of men, whose zeal was so much the purer, as their pious resignation only exposed them to dangers without any prospect of personal advantage, to privations without the vicissitude of enjoyment, served only to determine others of the same order to pass to the same part of the continent. They established themselves at Chiribichi, near Maracapana and Cumana, where they founded two convents. They preached the gospel with every appearance of success; and appeared to have so far conciliated the affections of the Indians, as to receive proofs from them of the greatest veneration. In con-

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sequence of this pacific disposition the Spaniards traded upon these coasts with perfect security. Every thing promised a sweet, insensible transition from the savage to the civil state, from brutal independence to subjection to the Spanish monarchy. This period of social harmony which held out such flattering hopes lasted two years and a half, at the end of which these ferocious Indians, regretting that they had renounced their ancient habits, made a violent attack upon the Friars of Chiribichi, at the very time that they were celebrating mass, and massacred them without mercy. At the same time they set fire to the convent of Cumana; but the friars were fortunate enough to make their escape in canoes to the island of Cubagua. All the Spaniards scattered over the coast were likewise butchered. This happened about the end of 1519.

First Military Expedition to Cumana.

As soon as the audience of St. Domingo were apprized of what had happened in Terra Firma, they dispatched Gonzalo Ocampo to Cumana, with three hundred men, to avenge those atrocious acts. For the detection and punishment of the principal offenders, that officer employed such artful expedients as completely answered the purpose. After having inflicted upon them the punishment due to their crime, he took his station at Cubagua, and from thence made such frequent and powerful incursions upon the coasts of Cumana, as compelled the Indians to sue for peace, promising their friendship and as-

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sistance to establish him amongst them. He received them into favour, taking at the same time the necessary measures to prevent their promises from becoming illusory, and availed himself of the good dispositions and assistance of the cacique to build a city, to which he gave the name of Toledo; but it seems to little purpose, for the Indian name Cumana has so far prevailed, that no one knows it under its new appellation.

It was at this period that Barthelemi De Las Casas, that apostle of Indian liberty and African slavery, to whom history has decreed the title of philanthropist, when he merited the epithet of Indiomane,* arrived from Spain, honoured with the appointment of governor of Cumana, conferred on him by Charles V. and accompanied by 300 labourers, destined to form the beginning of a new colony, and dressed in an unusual style, in order to make the Indians believe that they were not Spaniards. By concealing their nation, he sought to establish the sovereignty of the Spanish monarch; but, upon the present occasion, we forbear remarking on the ridiculous absurdity of these views; it is of greater importance to the reader to be informed, that Gonzalo Ocampo refused to lay down his authority in his favour; and that there arose between the two leaders and between the men which each had under his command, a division, which could not fail to be attended with the most fatal consequences, as was proved by the event. Las-Casas repaired to St. Domingo in order to submit the affair to the judgement of the audience. Ocam-

* Indian-mad.

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po followed close after him, whilst all his adherents took likewise their departure from Cumana. The Indians, who had submitted from compulsion, not from inclination, beheld in the discord which prevailed among the Spaniards, but particularly in the absence of their chiefs, and the departure of Ocampo's troops, a favourable opportunity for shaking off the yoke, which they did not fail to embrace.—They made an unexpected attack in the night time on the barracks where the workmen of Las-Casas lodged, and massacred them. A very small part of them made their escape in canoes to the island of Cubagua. All the Spaniards who were scattered upon the coast suffered the same fate. In the year 1523, the audience of St. Domingo dispatched James Castellon to Cumana, with a force sufficient to command respect for the Spanish name, and to form durable establishments in that quarter. This officer showed so much address in the employment of force and persuasion, rigor and indulgence, that the Indians suffered him unmolested to build a city, defended by an excellent fort, which the natives have never taken or attacked. The pearl-fishery, which had suffered much from the misfortunes which took place at Cumana, was re-establised. The Spaniards for a long time did no more than maintain themselves in that position. The reader is unapprized, that the reduction of the rest of this province has been attempted or accomplished with some success as late as the year 1656; that it was committed to missionaries, who have never yet finished that great work. As the details of every thing that concerns

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this province are to find place in the description which shall be particularly set a part for it, it is high time that I should return to the province of Venezuela, which was the theatre where the Europeans made the most signal displays of ambition, avarice, and courage.

The Audience of St. Domingo send a Commissary to Coro.

John Ampues, as has been already mentioned, had repaired to Coro in 1527, by order of the audience of St. Domingo, with the command of sixty men, in order to suppress the robberies which the absence of all public authority encouraged the Spaniards to commit over the whole extent of Terra Firma. This choice, which reflected honor on the tribunal, could not fall upon a man more worthy of fulfilling so delicate a mission. He openly declared himself the enemy of oppressors, and the defender of the oppressed. His mildness, his affability, his knowledge, soon gained the confidence and friendship of the cacique of the Coriana nation. A solemn treaty confirmed the union and alliance which they formed, and the cacique took the oath of allegiance and vassalage to the Spanish monarch.

Ampues, having thus secured peaceable possession of the country where this cacique governed, chose a convenient spot for building a city. On the 26th of July, 1527, he laid the foundation of Coro, aided rather than thwarted by the Indians. The projects of Ampues were vast, but wise. He entertain-

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ed reasonable expectations, that the same proceedings which had made the Coriana nation submissive to his authority, would gradually produce the same effect upon the other nations, and that example, as well as precept, would inspire them with the love of industry, so as insensibly to change that savage people into cultivators of the soil. Thus, the province of Venezuela had the pleasing prospect of arriving, without commotion, without a shock, to a prosperity which would crown the happiness of the inhabitants. The Spanish sovereignty would likewise be established amongst them upon the solid basis of love and gratitude; but that concatenation of secondary causes, ordained by providence, by some called destiny, had not so ordered it.

Cession of the Province of Venezuela to the Welsers.

The Spanish and Imperial crowns were united upon one head. This mass of power, more than sufficient to satisfy any ambition which was not unbounded, served only to inflame that of Charles V. It was not enough for him to be the greatest monarch in Europe, but he must be the only one. Instead of maintaining her tranquillity, as he might have done, he kept her in continual commotions. He passed his life in forming or opposing leagues. His head was so filled with military projects, that the balance of the political interests of Europe, which his great preponderance had placed in his own hands, found no equilibrium, but when it escaped from them. Sixty battles, which served only to swell his pride, instead of augmenting his glory,

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had no other result than the depopulation of his estates and the total deragement of his finances. Under princes of such a character, ruinous operations are continually inflicting on the state wounds which cannot be cicatrized till after a long lapse of time. The enumeration of all those that were inflicted under Charles V. is foreign to my subject. I shall confine my attention to that alone which has so severely affected the province of Venezuela.

The commercial house of the Welsers, established at Augsburg, the most respectable for their credit and capital of any then in existence, were considerably in advance to Charles V. They completely supplied the deficit resulting from the insufficiency of the receipts to cover the expenditures. The emperor was obliged to submit to their pleasure, not so much on account of the sums he had already received, as of those he hoped still to obtain from them. He submitted to the demand which the Welsers made, of granting them, under the title of an hereditary fief of the crown, the province of Venezuela, from Cape de la Vela as far as Maracapana, with the right of extending indefinitely towards the south. At the moment of closing this transaction, news of the wise and happy administration of John Ampues, who then governed the province, arrived at the Spanish court. Oviedo does honour to the emperor by supposing that he hesitated: It was all that the historian could do; because the fact would have appeared in direct contradiction to his assertions; at least, we have it on record that the grant was solemnly made on the following conditions:

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1st. The company were obliged to found, in the space of two years, two cities and three forts.

2d. They were to arm four ships for the transportation of 300 Spaniards, and 50 German master-miners, who were to be extended over all the Indies, at the expense of the company, and to work the mines for their benefit.

3d. The emperor was to grant the title of Adelantado to the person whom the Welsers should nominate.

4th. He was to allow them 4 per cent on one fifth part accruing to the crown from the mines which they should work, and another portion of land of twelve leagues square, in any part of the conquered country which they should choose.

5th. A power was given of making slaves of the Indians who should refuse to submit without force.

None of these articles were carried into execution, excepting such as were favourable to the Germans, particularly the fifth, the execution of which received a deplorable extension. Oviedo speaks, and he seldom speaks without proof, of a protector of the Indians, called Father Montesillo, nominated at that period by the emperor, in order to exercise that function in the same province. Even the tithes were adjudged to him to be employed for such purposes at his conscience should direct. It appears, from the silence of historians, and from the horrible administration which was exercised in the department that was assigned to him, either that he did not repair to his post, or that he became the accom-

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plice of all the crimes which by his office he was bound to prevent.

Ferocity of the Agents of the Welsers.

It would argue ignorance of the human heart, not to see at the first glance all the misfortunes which were to result from this treaty to the province of Venezuela, and even to the Spanish government.—How, indeed, could a speculation, purely commercial, which seems beneficial only in proportion to the quickness of the returns, and the amount of the profits, be changed into an agricultural speculation, in which the exertions of the parents procure but a scanty subsistence for their children? How could Germans, who had neither access, nor credit at the Spanish court, but what depended on the circumstance which had placed the imperial sceptre in the hands of the Spanish monarch, be induced to set afloat considerable sums of money in a country of which it would be impossible for them to retain the possession, far less the sovereignty, a single moment after the demise of Charles V? It was their interest to secure all the advantages which the actual state of the country could afford, without hazarding their property, by applying it to the improvement of possessions which they held by so precarious a tenure. Whatever plunder, devastation or crimes might be committed in the province, and cause the Spanish name to be held in execration, mattered little to foreign adventurers, who only sought to remain there the time necessary to amass their booty. The fact is, that their conduct far surpassed in enormity

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every thing that had been anticipated or dreaded from them.

The execution of this fatal treaty was committed to Ambrose Alfinger, whom the company nominated governor of their new territory. Another German, named Sailler, was appointed his lieutenant. Four hundred adventurers formed the body of the expedition, who took their departure in the year 1528, and arrived the same year at Coro. The government was willingly resigned by John Ampues in favor of Alfinger, who soon informed himself of the resources which the country presented for the gratification of avarice. He expected to find there mines of gold more abundant than those of Cibao and Mexico, whose renown, at that time, resounded all over Europe. But when he learned, that there was no mine wrought there; that the Indians formed but small scattered settlements, and were totally unacquainted with every sort of luxury; that the gold there was not manufactured into coin; and that the only use made of some particles of that metal which the inundations of the rivers conveyed, or chance presented upon the surface of the earth, was limited to some trinkets, without any other artificial preparation than what they received in moulds coarsely made: when he observed, in short, that the means of accumulating riches were not so easy there as he had imagined, he adopted the pernicious plan of penetrating with an armed force into the interior of the country, in order to commit depredations on the inhabitants, and dispose for money of all the prisoners he could take.

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After having made some arrangements for the government of Coro which he placed in the hands of his lieutenant, he set out with a strong detachment, boldly advanced into the interior of the country, crossed the lake of Maracaibo, plundering, butchering, ransacking whatever came within the reach of his ferocious hands. Whenever he acquired any considerable booty he sent it off to Coro. There the gold was deposited, there the Indians were sold to merchants who had fixed themselves there for the purpose of carrying on that trade. The loss of his companions was considerable. He must undoubtedly have had a heart of steel to have been capable of persevering in such astrocities. He demanded, at different times, reinforcements, which were sent to him; in short, after having for three years rendered himself notorious, as the terror, the tyrant and the butcher of the Indians, he finished his career by becoming their victim. He was slain by them, in 1531, at the distance of six leagues from Pampeluna, in a valley which has retained the name of Miser (Mr.) Ambrosio.

John, a German, being appointed by brevet on the part of the Welsers, to succeed to Alfinger in case of death, assumed the reins of government. Yielding either to his abhorrence of cruelty, to the indolence of his disposition, or to his want of courage, he kept close at Coro. His companions continued to act upon the plan of Alfinger, which was dignified with the name of conquest; although, in correct language, it might, with greater propriety, be called robbery. In 1533, George Spirra was sent out by

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the Welsers, with the title of governor, taking with him 400 men, one half of them from Spain, the other from the Canary islands. This force had no sooner arrived at Coro, than they concerted means to avail themselves of the assistance of those already upon the spot to gratify the expectations of the rapacious and the avaricious who accompanied them. It was determined that they should be divided into detached parties, with a view to scour different parts of the country, and then to concentrate their whole force at a certain stated time and place. George Spirra took with him 400 men. Every one directed his march as he thought proper into the heart of forests that had never been penetrated by man. They resembled so many tygers, breathing nothing but devastation.—Their exploits consisted in exterminating the Indians who fled, making slaves of those who surrendered, and plundering all the effects, which these miserable inhabitants possessed. What fatigue, what privations, what obstacles, and what dangers must they have undergone! This expedition continued for five years. George Spirra did not return to Coro till the year 1539, when he brought with him only 80 men of the 400 he had set out with. It was from this expedition that we had the first account of the existence, whether real or fabulous, of the country of El Dorado. George Spirra, the following year, set off for St. Domingo. He died on his return to Coro, on the 12th of June, 1540.

Had I before mentioned, that in the year 1532 a bishop was established at Coro, who did not repair

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to his charge till the year 1536, it would excite astonishment, that a prelate, the sanctity of whose ministry enjoined upon him to plead the cause of the unfortunate, should have remained passive and silent in a country where the duties of humanity were disregarded, where the thirst of gold had made pillage an honourable profession, and where avarice had converted man into an article of trade, the product of which became the reward of the crimes of his tyrant. What sensation, then, will the reader experience, when he is informed, that, in the year 1540, the audience of St. Domingo invested this same prelate with the civil government of Venezuela, and Philip De Urre with the military department; and that, under the authority of that prelate, affairs would have been so far from taking a turn more conformable to the principles of justice, that they would have assumed a more shocking aspect, had not that been rendered impossible, by their being already carried to the last stage of human depravity.

The first expedition which was made by the orders of Bishop Bastidas was directed against the Indians of the lake of Maracaibo. One Peter Limpias was charged with this incursion, and the fruit of it was a small quantity of gold, and 500 Indians, who were immediately sold.

That same bishop sent his lieutenant, Philip de Urre, with 130 men, to commit new robberies, sacrifice new victims, and to desolate with new ravages. This expedition, which was attended with many misfortunes, without being followed by any

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advantages, offers some information, respecting the country El Dorado, which a regard to order renders it necessary to postpone for the present. Upon a future occasion, separate details shall be given upon the subject of that Utopian or at least unknown country. Philip de Urre continued his excursion for four years. Reduced to the last degree of wretchedness, he again turned his face towards Coro. But, before he arrived there he was assassinated by Limpias, one of his officers, assisted by Caravajal, who, by means of a forged commission, having seized the government of the province, did not think himself secure in his usurpation, without getting rid of Philip de Urre, who had been appointed lieutenant-general, and to whom the government reverted by right, in consequence of the promotion of bishop Alfinger to the see of Porto Rico. It was this usurper Caravajal, that founded the city of Tocuyo, in 1545; its first population was 59 Spaniards, among whom were four regidors and two alcaides, appointed for the formation of the cabildo. It is the only establishment made in the province of Venezuela, while it had the misfortune of remaining under the monopoly and the tyranny of the agents of the Welsers.

The Welsers are dispossessed of Venezuela.

At length the period arrived when the disasters resulting from the grant made to the Germans became known to the emperor. Convinced that, under such an administration, that country would

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ever present the hideous aspect of devastation, he determined to resume his rights of sovereignty, of which he ought never to have divested himself. The treaty with the Welsers was rescinded, the Germans were dispossessed, and the emperor appointed as governor the licentiate John Peres de Tolosa, who, according to Oviedo, had likewise the title of captain-general.

Happy Effects which result from it.

This new reform produced a great change in the system and mode of conquest. It was a settled point, that instead of committing devastation they should form settlements; instead of plundering, they should respect property. The laws of the 9th November 1526, and 5th November 1540, the 20th May 1542, the 20th August 1550, and the 13th January 1552, were put into execution. These laws declare the Indians to be free, not even excepting those who should be taken prisoners in the act of bearing arms.

As soon as an Indian nation was subjected to the Spaniards, a convenient site was chosen to build a town, the better to secure the conquest. One hundred Spaniards formed the population of the new city, to which a cabildo was attached. They afterwards divided the city in portions among the new inhabitants, according to their rank and merit; and after having made an enumeration of the Indians, as exact as circumstances admitted, they shared them amongst the Spaniards, who thus acquired over them a right, not of property, but of

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superintendance. This is what is called *repartimientos de Indios*, the dividing of the Indians.

Encomiendas.

This measure which, in order to become useful, required only more fixed regulations, together with a system better adapted to the great object which it was designed to secure, soon received, under the name of encomiendas, an extension, a consistence, a form of administration, which reflects honor upon the legislator. If this opinion does not appear ridiculous, it cannot, at least, but appear extraordinary; for, I believe, it is the first that has flowed from any pen, except that of a Spaniard, in favor of the encomiendas. It does not, however, follow from this, that I deny their being chargeable with abuses in their administration, but where is there any human institution which is not liable to the same objection? Our present object is to examine, whether the law is, in itself, rational, just and useful.

Their Object.

The effect of the encomiendas was to place under the immediate superintendance, under the authority even of a Spaniard, exemplary for his morals, the Indians who lived within a limited extent of ground, corresponding to that of the *communes* in France. He had no right of property over them; whatever right he had, regarded only their actions. It was his duty,

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1. To protect them against all injustice, against every vexation, to which their ignorance of the civil laws exposed them.

2. To unite them in one village, without the power of residing there himself.

3. To cause them to be instructed in the christian religion.

4. To organize their domestic government after the model of the social institutions, causing the head of a family to enjoy the respect due to paternal authority, an authority very feeble, not to say altogether unknown amongst the greater part of the savage Indians.

5. To cause families to observe the relations which society establishes amongst all its members.

6. To direct them in their agricultural and domestic labours.

7. To subdue in them all the inclinations, all the habits of savage life.

In return for these attentions, the Indians were to pay the commissioned superintendants of the encomiendas, who were called encomenderos, a yearly tribute in labour, fruits, or money. When this tribute was once paid, the Indian was exempted from every other personal service.

Their Utility.

This establishment was, therefore, as may be observed, a kind of apprenticeship to the civil life, for at the same time that philosophy and humanity were contending for the liberty of the Indians, reason and policy required that some precautions should be ta-

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ken equally suitable to their total want of knowledge, and to the rudeness of their manners. Their sudden admission to the exercise of civil rights could not but be hurtful to themselves, and fatal to the society of which they too hastily became members: for, as is observed by an ancient magistrate, a love of social life is happily a natural sentiment in man, but it ought to be fortified by habit and cultivated by reason. Nature, by endowing man with sensibility, has inspired him with the love of pleasure and the dread of pain. Society is the work of nature, since it is nature that places man in society; but the love of society is a secondary sentiment which flows from reason only, and reason itself is but the knowledge acquired by experience and reflection upon what is useful or hurtful to us. Man lives in society, because nature gives him birth in it. He loves that society, because he finds he has need of it. Thus when we say, that sociability is a sentiment natural to man, we thereby declare that man having a desire of providing for his own safety, and contributing to his own happiness, cherishes the means which promote those views; that being born with the faculty of sensation, he prefers the good to the bad; that being susceptible of experience and reflection, he becomes reasonable, that is to say, capable of comparing the advantages which the social life procures him, with the disadvantages which he would experience if he were deprived of it. In one word, man is social, because these sentiments, natural to all men, are developed and fortified by the education received in the social state, but are stifled and anni-

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hilated by the individual independence attached to the savage life. They must then have been entirely extinguished among the Indians of Terra-Firma, who enjoyed neither government nor laws, nor arts, nor police, and it was only by reasoning, and the powerful influence of example that they could be inspired with a taste for them. It is in this point of view, that the probationary course which the Indians went through under the encomiendas, may be considered as a laudable institution. It is even observable that the government was constantly attentive to conduct them to that degree of perfection, which forms the limits of human foresight and power.

Principles by which they were governed.

On the 13th of May 1538, it was ordained, that the encomiendas should be exclusively granted to inhabitants residing in the very places where they were to exercise their functions; but cupidity, which is always accompanied with intrigue, soon made it the boon of favour. A law of the 20th of October, 1545, opened the door to solicitations, by permitting that the Indians should be indiscriminately entrusted to persons of merit. Then were courtiers observed to receive encomiendas, and thus the end of their institution was defeated. That abuse, and it was a great one, was corrected by an ordinance of the 28th of November 1568, and by the instruction of the viceroys in 1595, which may be seen in chap. xvii. It was no longer permitted

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to give encomiendas, except to those who had contributed to the conquest, pacification and population of the Indies, and to their descendants. Viceroys, governors, military chiefs, bishops, priests, and fiscal officers, hospitals, convents, and religious fraternities, were deprived the right of holding encomiendas by the ordinance of 1565. This regulation extended, in 1591, to foreigners, although in the service of the king.

The right of the encomendero was fixed, unalienable, and, as it were, attached to the personal qualities of the incumbent by different laws, the execution of which was confirmed by that of the 18th of April 1628. The encomenderos could neither hire nor pledge the Indians committed to their charge, under penalty of privation of office. The product of the tribute paid by the Indians could not amount in favour of the encomendero to more than two thousand piasters. The surplus was disposed of in pensions, according to the order of the king of the 30th of November, 1568. Finally, according to the regulation for promoting the population of the Indians, the encomiendas were granted for two lives, that is to say, to descend from father to son, after which they were to revert to the crown, and the Indians to become direct vassals of the king, and members of the great society. Personal considerations had caused an extension to be given to this regulation which was abrogated by an ordinance of the 14th of October, 1580.

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Their Extinction.

This order of things subsisted as long as conquest was effected by force of arms, because, after having reduced, they then sought to civilize the Indians. But when they adopted the resolution of employing, for their reduction, christian morality alone; when the Spanish sovereignty called religion to its aid; when apostolic missions supplied the place of military expeditions, and ministers of the church alone were charged with the civil and religious instruction of the Indians, the encomiendas had no longer any object, and consequently became useless. It was from this period, which extends to the middle of the seventeeth century, that they ceased to be granted in the captain-generalship of Caraccas; and before the middle of the seventeenth, those which existed became extinct. Is the object to which they were directed better fulfilled? This is a question, which shall be examined in its proper place.

Causes which occasioned Force to be employed at Venezuela and conciliatory Measures to be abandoned.

The part of Terra-Firma, and perhaps of all America, which owes least to the zeal of the missionaries is the province of Venezuela. Whatever conquest was made there during the first century of its discovery, was effected by force of arms. Much blood would have been spared if persuasion and morality, had been employed from the first; the

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wise, but too short administration of Ampues, is an incontestible proof of this truth. But the irruption of the agents of the Welsers, their devastations, their acts of cruelty, and their perjuries, fixed among the Indians a settled horror of the Spanish name, which impelled them to reject every pacific measure, and a terror, which rendered them capable of every effort of despair. The experience of fifteen or twenty years had persuaded them that the Europeans had no other intention, than that of their exterminating, nor any other means of quenching their thirst of gold, than plunder. With such notions, unfortunately too much justified by all that they were obliged to experience, the voice of morality would have been idly addressed to them, and treaties formed in vain. There were but two alternatives left, either entirely to abandon the country, or to subdue it by force. As the former resolution was not compatible with the sentiments which prevailed in those days, the latter was adopted, to the great effusion of Spanish and Indian blood. All the caciques defended their territories with a persevering firmness and resolution, of which they were hitherto deemed incapable. Never were the Spaniards permitted to make the smallest settlement, without a severe conflict with the nation who occupied the ground.

Foundation of the first Cities—Barquisimeto.

The city of Barquisimeto was founded by Villegas, in 1552, but not till he had conquered the soil from the Indians who inhabited it. Even after

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it was founded, it had to resist several attacks from the Giraharas Indians, who, not being able to dislodge the Spaniards, succeeded, at least, in compelling them to abandon some mines recently discovered in the environs of St. Philip-de-Buria, whose name they bore.

Palmes the same as Nirgua.

A city, named Palmes, which Capt. Diego Montesqui raised in 1554, for the protection of these mines, was no sooner built by the Spaniards than it was destroyed by the Indians. No trace of it exists at this time. That same year, namely 1554, Diego de Paradas being ordered to rebuild that city thought it adviseable, before he entered upon the execution of his task, to scour the surrounding country with his forces; having routed the Indians, he inflicted such punishments upon them as did not much redound to the praise of his humanity. When he thought the possession of the country would be no more disputed with him he built a city, to which he gave the name of Nirgua; but scarce had he withdrawn when the Indians profiting by the advantages which the inundations presented, cut off the communications, and compelled the Spaniards to evacuate it. They built it again, but in another situation, which they judged more convenient for its defence; but their precaution did not prevent this from experiencing the fate of the other. They however afterwards took new precautions, by means of which, the city, being once more raised from its

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ruins, was able to make a stand, although with difficulty; for its perfect security is only to be dated from 1628, the epoch of the extermination of all the Giraharas Indians."

Valencia.

Alonso Dias Moreno, founder of Valencia, had many obstacles to surmount, many victories to gain, in order to get possession of the site, which was assigned to it in 1556. Lake Tacarigua, which has exchanged its own name for that of the city, was surrounded by a numerous body of Indians, whom the abundance of fish and game had fixed in that quarter. It was necessary to vanquish them in order to obtain by terror, a peace which had in vain been asked from them upon amicable terms.

Truxillo.

The fertility of the environs of Truxillo was discovered in 1549 by Diego Ruis Vallejo, and suggested to the Spaniards the design of forming a settlement there. To do this they were obliged to make war against the Indian nations, who occupied the space contained between the mountains of Merida, and the spot where Carora now stands; which tract was at that time called the province of the Cuicas; and it was not till 1556 that Diego Garcia de Paredes, after many conflicts, could, with any appearance of safety, lay the foundation of the new city, which its founders were compelled to abandon on ac-

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count of a treacherous insurrection of the Indians. The country was afterwards reconquered, and in 1570, this city was permanently placed where it now stands, and secured against all new attacks.

Caraccas.

No ground was so obstinately disputed by the Indians as the valley where the city of Caraccas is situated. Of all the province of Venezuela this part was the most populous, and its inhabitants the most distinguished for their address, resolution, and love of independence. In a circumference of ten or twelve leagues, were computed one hundred and fifty thousand Indians, under the controul of upwards of thirty caciques. This country, by its fertility and population, enjoyed a reputation which had long excited in the Spaniards a desire of possessing it.

The first who attempted its subjugation was Francis Faxardo, born in the island of Margaretta, the son of an illustrious Spaniard, and Donna Isabella, cacique of the Gayqueri nation, and grand-daughter of a cacique named Charayma in the territory of the Caraccas Indians. Faxardo spoke all the languages of the Indians who inhabited the country which he wished to possess. He depended much on this circumstance for conciliating their friendship, and obtaining by persuasion what it was impossible for him to obtain by force. His object was to make the Spanish sovereignty recognised there.—Success appeared easy to him, and in his success he viewed his

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own elevation, his glory, and his fortune. He took with him three Creoles of Margaretta, twenty vassals of his mother, and some small articles for exchange. He disembarked at the river Chiuspa, fourteen leagues to windward of Goayre. His affability, his knowledge of the Indian languages, and his maternal origin gained him a ready access to the friendship of all the caciques, who received him with the most affectionate demonstrations of attachment. He employed some of his men to examine the country and to study the genius of the inhabitants. After that he again passed over to Margaretta, to the great regret of the Indians who had already made him their oracle.

On the relation which Faxardo gave his mother of the dispositions of the Indians of the valley of Maya or Caraccas, she encouraged him to pursue his project, and determined to accompany him. Accordingly they both repaired to the continent, with a hundred Indians attached to the service of his mother. Eleven Spaniards only consented to join the expedition. They disembarked at the place where Faxardo had landed on his first voyage. On their arrival the joy was universal. Such an intimate friendship was contracted between them and the Indians as immediately assumed all the characters of the greatest frankness and stability; it appeared unalterable. To the mother of Faxardo they offered all the valley which is called Panecillo as a present; she accepted it and enjoyed there consideration similar to that which is manifested to a sovereign.

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Faxardo, wishing to profit by these favourable circumstances, requested permission of Gutierres, the Spanish governor, to build a city, which was readily granted him. On the first overtures which Faxardo made to the Indians he incurred their suspicion. Suspicion was soon followed by misunderstanding. From words they proceeded to actions. The Indians had recourse to arms, and poisoned the waters. The mother of Faxardo died during these disturbances; and the tumults became so serious that Faxardo thought himself very happy, after having lost all his men, to be able to make his escape to Margaretta.

Neither past nor future dangers could however divert him from his project. He prepared himself for a third attempt. His new expedition was again composed of twelve associates, not of his fortune, but of his temerity. He disembarked in the territory of the only cacique who remained attached to his cause, and traversed the country as far as Valencia, in order to acquire such accurate knowledge of it as would enable him to give the governor of the province information sufficiently satisfactory to determine him to grant the commission and forces necessary to accomplish its conquest. But he was stopped in his career by a considerable body of Indians, who had resolved to make a spirited opposition to his design. His death had been inevitable if the natural sweetness of his disposition and the command he had of the Indian languages had not disarmed the hand that was ready to strike him,

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and changed the fury of the savages into benevolence.

He arrived, therefore, at Valencia, from whence he sent some plans to the governor Collado accompanied with very minute details respecting the possibility of the conquest which he meditated. He obtained from him the rank of lieutenant general, with thirty men, and some horned cattle. Unable to proceed as a conqueror with a force so feeble, he condescended to visit the Indians in the capacity of a negotiator and friend. He humbly begged alliances, and obtained them without much difficulty. The Arbacos, Teques, Taramaquas, and Chaganacotos, formed an union with him, which was confirmed by treaties. Thus he opened for himself the passage of the vallies of Aragoa, the mountain of St. Peter, and the valley of Caraccas. As he had neither force sufficient to maintain his ground in the interior of the country, nor confidence sufficient in the Indians to risk himself amongst them, he retired to the sea coast, and, in 1560, built a city at the port of Caravalleda, which he called after the name of governor Collado, a name which it renounced on his death, for that of Caravaledo. This discovery, which enhanced his merit, and ought to have augmented his credit, was, on the contrary, the cause of his ruin. Some time after, on being informed that there existed mines in the valley of St. Francis, he repaired to that place with an escort sufficient to repulse the attack which he had reason to apprehend. He actually found there a gold mine of the most promising appearance, and immediately forwarded a sample of it

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to Collado. The inhabitants of Tocuyo became so excessively jealous of him, and the governor so far partook of the same feeling, that he deprived him of his commission, and ordered him to retire in disgrace to Caravalleda, affording by that proceeding equal gratification to the envy of others, and his own.

Faxardo was succeeded by Peter Midranda. Collado himself went to survey the mine, which he found even to exceed the report of Faxardo; but a general insurrection of the Indians entirely disconcerted his chimerical hopes, and compelled all those who had flocked to see these new treasures to make a precipitate retreat. Fresh troops were dispatched to recover the mines, and they actually accomplished that object; but it was only to be exposed to new schemes of treachery, and again to abandon the position they had taken.

By means of a reinforcement, the Spaniards succeeded in building a small village, that is, a group of huts adjoining one another, to which they gave the name of St. Francis. This paltry establishment would be far from meriting the honor of being mentioned, if it did not appear interesting from its having been fixed on the very spot where the city of Caraccas now stands.

In the mean time, there arrived at Barburata a certain adventurer of the name of Aguirre, with three hundred men, whose march was every where marked with crimes. The Spaniards are pleased to give the too imposing appellation of tyrant to the leader of this banditti, when he only merits that of robber; for

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the tyrant is actuated by the ambition of power joined to the dread of losing it. Aguirre and his followers robbed, and shed blood merely to indulge a criminal habit. Having departed from Peru in order to make discoveries under a chief whom they assassinated, they sailed down the Amazon, and touched at Margaretta, where they committed very atrocious acts. From Barburata they went to Valencia, destroying one another when they could not find victims enough to feed their ferocity. At length, Aguirre, after having inflicted death upon so many innocent persons, became himself its victim at Barquisimeto.* This story, which is not otherwise connected with my subject than as it occasioned the suspension of the conquest of Caraccas, is amply detailed in a work entitled, Conquest of the province of Venezuela by Oviedo y Bannos.

The troops, which were stationed at St. Francis, by marching against the pretended tyrant, left Faxardo at Caravalleda in so weak a state, and so much exposed to the attacks and treacherous machinations of the Indians, that, after having made incredible efforts to maintain his position, he was obliged to evacuate Terra-Firma and retire to Margaretta, where he formed a fourth expedition, with which he disembarked near Cumana. But Alonso Cobos, the monster who governed there, jealous of the glory which this bold, indefatigable, but unfortunate man was upon the point of acquiring, with the most abomina-

* And not in the island of Trinidad, as M. De La Condamine asserts, in the account of his voyage to South America.

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ble treachery, decoyed him to Comana and there strangled him.

Governor Bernaldes seriously resumed, in 1565, the project of the conquest of Caraccas. He gave the command of the expedition to Gutierres de la Penna, and was himself disposed to take a part in it. But, when arrived at some distance from the soil which he wished to occupy, they found the Savannas and the mountains covered with Arbacos, Mergolos, and Quiriquiros Indians. In this situation, not seeing any possibility of effecting a passage, he thought it prudent to retire. The successful execution of this enterprise was reserved for Don Pedro de Leon, who arrived from Spain in quality of governor, with an express recommendation from the king to neglect no means of accomplishing the conquest of Caraccas. Agreeably to this instruction, in 1667 an expedition was formed, the command of which was conferred upon Don Diego Losada. This army, composed of 150 fighting men, besides 80 scouts, made a descent by the vallies of Aragoa. Its operations were successful as far as the bottom of mount Terepayme, which is even to this day called the Cocuisas, after the name of the Indian inhabitants. Here appeared a formidable army which instantly commenced a vigorous attack, and kept the victory a long time in suspense. The Indians, however, lost such a multitude of men that the field of battle remained in possession of the Spaniards. Having advanced four leagues farther, the army encountered in the defiles of the mountain a considerable body of Indians, who showed much greater courage, and made

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more judicious dispositions, than had been manifested in the former action. In order to make a still more dreadful impression, the Indians had set fire to the forests of the mountain, intending to involve the enemy in conflagration and smoke. All the presence of mind of Losada, and all the the valor of his soldiers were necessary to extricate themselves from this critical situation. Every danger, however, was braved and surmounted by the sacrifice of some lives; but it was only to fall into another not less terrible.

The cacique Guaycaipuro, distinguished for his spirited defence of his country, had posted himself at the river de San Pedro with ten thousand Indians. The battle commenced immediately upon the appearance of the Spaniards. The contest was long, obstinate and bloody. Some Spaniards fell in it; but victory declared in their favor. They continued their march and arrived at the Aguntas from which place a plain three leagues long extends to Caraccas. The cacique of this place had declined taking part against the Spaniards, unwilling to expose to devastation the great plantations which he had in his territories. Losada, therefore, was here enabled to give to his army some moments of repose, of which they had great need. At the same time, he knew that fresh armies of Indians were waiting for him in the defiles through which he was obliged to pass in order to arrive at the valley of St. Francis or the Caraccas. On this account he resolved to take the way on his right, which led across the mountain to a valley not farther distant than half a league from the Caraccas, to which he gave the name which it

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still retains of Valle de la Pascua, valley of Easter, because he arrived there in the holy-week, and remained without uneasiness, till after the Easter holy-days.

The scheme of Losada was to make every effort to conciliate the friendship of the Indians, by negotiation and good treatment to soothe them into submission to Spanish dominion, to induce them to prefer the social laws, which protect every individual, to the state of nature, where every one is exposed to the insults and exaction of the strongest. Therefore, in the beginning, he made use of arms solely for defence. All the Indians who were taken, were well treated, caressed, instructed, and released. They amused the Spaniards by the most flattering promises, and consented to take whatever oaths were required of them with so much the more complacency, as they attached no importance to them, and thus they departed seemingly well pleased; but that liberty which they owed to the generosity of their conquerors they employed in contriving new snares for the Spaniards, and in forming new coalitions to fight them. As soon as Losada became impressed with the afflicting certainty, that lenient measures served only to give the Indians a false idea of his weakness, he seriously determined to resort to the plan of military coercion. He left Maldonado with 80 men, in the valley of St. Francis, whilst with the rest of his army he scoured the country for ten leagues to the eastward, where he found many ambushes, many posts, many Indians disposed to dispute his passage; but it was in vain

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they attempted to resist him; every thing yielded to his discipline and valour. He continued to conquer with every possible success till he learned that Maldonado was besieged by more than two thousand Indians. This intelligence obliged him to retrace his steps in order to fly to the assistance of the camp of St. Francis. On his approach the siege was raised, and the Indians betook themselves to flight.

The intention of Losada had, at first, been to found no city till the conquest of the country was atchieved, and tranquillity well secured. But circumstances induced him to change his opinion. He laid, therefore, the foundation of the city of Caraccas, to which he gave the name of Santiago de Leon de Caraccas, which is but a combination of his own name, with that of the governor Ponce de Leon, and of the Indian nation who occupied the ground upon which it was built. The precise date of its foundation is unknown. History has only been able to ascertain the year, but it was towards the end of 1567.

The Spaniards continued upwards of ten years waging war with the Indians in the environs of Caraccas. They made continual sallies but not always with success. During that interval, they several times saw themselves upon the point of being compelled to evacuate the country. To support all the fatigues, all the privations, which they experienced, and to come off victorious from the battles which they were daily in the habit of giving and receiving, required all the perseverance, patience, and self-denial which are reckoned amongst the characteristic

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virtues of the Spaniards, as well as the intrepidity peculiar to those who are the subjects of the present narration.

Maracaïbo.

Whilst Losada was completing the conquest of Caraccas, Captain Alonso Pacheco, an inhabitant of Truxillo, was engaged in the western part of the country with the Saparas, Quiriquiros, Atilas and Toas Indians, who opposed his march to Maracaïbo. This conquest was neither short nor easy; it was the work of time and courage. After he had reduced them to submission, he built a city in 1571 upon the border of the lake of Maracaïbo, under the name of New-Zamora, a name which it has not retained, for it is now known only by that of Maracaïbo.

Carora.

In 1572, John de Salamanca, with seventy men, marched against the Indians of Bararigua, and on the 9th of June of the same year founded the city of Carora.

St. Sebastian de los Reyes.

The city of St. Sebastian de los Reyes was founded in 1585, by Don Sebastian Dias. The Indians attacked it several times, and with greater hopes of success, on account of the very small number of its inhabitants at that time; but their valour made up for the deficiency of their number.

We may see, by the manner in which these cities have been founded, that they owed their existence

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to force alone; their preservation to the courage of their first inhabitants. Perhaps, it might be expected that we should here present a circumstantial account of those conquests which have embraced all the province of Venezuela, which, with considerable exceptions, are by no means uninteresting; but, besides that such a task would exceed the limits I have already prescribed to myself, the perspicuity, method and accuracy, with which Oviedo, a creole of Caraccas, has handled that subject, would have deterred me from an undertaking in which I could not but appear inferior. My duty, I conceive, is sufficiently discharged by publicly referring to the work, and paying to the author that tribute of praise which is certainly due to him. He has described, in a masterly manner, the means which have been employed to bring that country under the authority of the Spaniards; I have, therefore, only to point out those which are employed to keep them in it. He has given a faithful representation of the ancient state of that country; it is my part to render an account of what is its present condition, and thence form conjectures of what it will hereafter become.

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CHAPTER II.

Chorography of the eastern part of Terra Firma—Division of the captain generalship of Caraccas—Temperature—Mountains—Mines—Pearl-Fishery—Salt—Mineral Springs—Seasons—Rains—Earthquakes—Timber for building, carpenter-work, cabinet-work, for particular uses, for dyeing—Plants—Gums—Medicinal resins and oils—Lakes—Lake Maracaïbo, Lake of Valencia—Rivers—Guigues, Tocuyo, Aroa, Yaracuy, Tuy, Neveri, Manzanares, Cariaco, Guarapiche—Sea—Tides—Worms or Tarets—Surge—Ports—Portete—and Bayahonda, Maracaïbo, Coro, Porto-Cabello—Turiamo Pata-nemo—Barburata and Sienega—Ocumara—La Goayra—Caravaleda—Port-Francis—Higuerote—Bay or Lake Tacarigua—Barcelona—Cumana—Gulf of Cariaco—Point of Araya—Channel of Margaretta—Port of Carico—Gulf of Paria.

Division of the captain-generalship of Caraccas.

THE country which I have undertaken to describe, is that which forms the captain-generalship of Caraccas. It comprehends the province of Venezuela in the centre, the government of Maracaïbo on the west, Guiano on the south, the government of Cumana on the east, and the island of Margaretta on the north-east.

This province is bounded by the sea on the north, from the 75th degree of west longitude from the meridian of Paris, to the 62d, that is to say, all the extent from the Cape de la Vela, to the point of Megilones or Paria; on the east, likewise, by the sea, from the 12th to the 8th degree of north latitude. Dutch Guiana and Peru bound it on the south, and the kingdom of St. Fe on the west.

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Temperature.

According to its situation, which, beginning from the 12th degree of north latitude, extends towards the equinoctial line, this country might be expected to present to us only a scorching sun, and a land rendered uninhabitable by excessive heat; but nature, alternately generous, irregular, and capricious, has so diversified the temperature of its climate, that in several places the inhabitants enjoy the coolness of a perpetual spring; whilst in others, the presiding latitude exercises, without controul, the powers which the laws of nature have assigned to it.

Mountains.

The singularity of this temperature is to be accounted for from the link of a chain of mountains, which commences at one of the Andes of Quito, traverses Merida and the government of Varinas, after that stretches to the north, as far as the coast, thence takes an eastern direction, always insensibly diminishing in its height till it finally loses itself in the island of Trinidad. The space occupied by that chain of mountains which traverses the provinces of Caraccas, is, in its ordinary breadth, fifteen leagues; in some points twenty, but in none less than ten. It is evident, from their moderate elevation, that the creator has destined almost the whole of them for the use of man; for there are very few of them but are improveable and habitable. That which seems most obstinately to resist the efforts of cultivation, is

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the eastern Picacho, near Caraccas, whose height is about 1278 fathoms. After it comes Tumeriquiri, having an elevation of 935 fathoms above the level of the sea. These inequalities of the surface create so many different temperatures, very favourable to the diversity of vegetable productions.

After traversing these mountains from north to south, we find immense plains running from east to west, from the village of Pas, in the 67th degree of west longitude, from the meridian of Paris, to the bottom of the mountains of St. Fe. They are bounded on the south, by the river Oronoko, beyond which is Guiana, which shall be spoken of separately. In these plains they suffer the most intense heat.

Very little research has been made, with regard to the conformation of the mountains of Venezuela.—The Spaniards, who lose no time in those kinds of operations which are more curious than useful, and who will not deign to fix their attention upon any thing but a gold, or, at the very least, a silver mine, have left this in obscurity. But, according to the system generally adopted, with respect to the conformation of mountains, it does not appear, that those of Venezuela have a sufficient elevation to pass for antediluvian. Besides, they have not so much of the pyramidical form as distinguishes the primitive mountains, nor the pointed and prominent rocks, stripped of all verdure, the effect of the wearing away of the earth, occasioned by the rains; on the contrary they are covered with a variety of productions which announce the vigour rather than

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the decrepitude of vegetation. It is, therefore, not only presumable, but evident, that they are but an accumulation of strata of different substances, which the hand of time has formed, and which the same hand will destroy. What further corroborates this opinion is the quantity of calcareous substances found in these mountains, of which they would have been deprived had they been primitive. Some marble has been discovered in them, and we know that this kind of stone is but the product of marine shells, madrepores, &c. which are only met with in mountains of the second order, which owe their existence entirely to the revolutions of the globe, to the caprices and convulsions of nature. And yet Baron Humboldt has found upon the mountain de la Selle, the highest of that chain, some fine granite, of which the quartz, the felt-spar and the mica are the constitutent parts, which would prove, at least, according to the system of M. Pallas, that this mountain is either primitive, or has emerged from the bosom of the waters at a much earlier period than its companions. But, not to insist any farther upon a subject which I may not be able to pursue, without disappointing the expectations of the reader, let me be permitted to leave to him the pleasure, the care, or the pains of entering on a more profound investigation of that question; for it is the description of a country, and not the history of the globe, which I have undertaken to give. It is a truth which requires the support of neither commentary nor argument, that these mountains, with a conformation similar to that of all the other mountains

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scattered over the surface of the earth, contain the same substances, and would furnish the attentive observer with as many objects of curiosity, as subjects of reflection; but, when all is considered, it must be allowed to be a truth not less certain, that agriculture in these provinces presents to man such a variety of objects of useful and ingenious industry, as will sufficiently employ his vacant hours, and gratify his ambition.

Mines.

If the provinces of Caraccas enjoy peculiar happiness, it is because they have no mines to work. By diligent search, the first conquerors found four gold mines, which they wrought under the name of the royal mine of St. Philippe de Buria. In 1554, it was already abandoned on account of a revolt of the blacks, who wrought at it, and of the Indians, who beheld in that establishment the certain loss of their independence. The ensuing year, governor Villacinda proposed to resume the works. He built a city there, which was called Palmes; but it was no sooner built than destroyed. The enterprize was renewed six months after, under the conduct of Paradas; but was attended with no greater success than the preceding attempts. He built the city of Nirgua, which the Indians forced him to evacuate. In 1557, the scheme was resumed by governor Gutierres de la Pegna. A city was built on the banks of the Nirgua under the name of New-Xeres, which, it was hoped, would prove more fortunate,

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but it did not withstand the attacks of the Indians longer than 1568.

Francisco Faxardo found a second mine in the environs of the city of St. Sebastian de los Reyes; and governor Collado was the first that paid attention to its works. An insurrection of the Indians caused it to be abandoned. A peace made with the cacique Guaycaypuro, although far from being a sincere one, afforded another opportunity of returning to the works; but they were soon stopped, for the Indians made their attack with such a multitude of men, and at so unexpected a moment, that they butchered all the workmen, and destroyed the works: nor has there ever been any attempt to re-establish them.

Sebastian Dias, in 1584, discovered at Apa and Carapa, not far from the banks of the Tuy, two mines where the gold was very abundant, and at twenty-three carats. Unfortunately for the authors of the discovery, but fortunately for the present generation, the country was found to be so unhealthy, that every person got sick there, and a considerable number died. It, therefore, became indispensably necessary to abandon treasures that could not be attained without a sacrifice of men, which the smallness of the population did not permit them to support. In 1606, Sancho Alquisa wished to re-establish them. They searched for them, but could not find them. Time, or rather the Indians, had not left a single vestige of them undestroyed. Governor D. Francisco Berrocaran made similar efforts in 1698, and with as little success.

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All these fortunate crosses have delivered the inhabitants from the evils attendant on the working of gold and silver mines, which, as long as they last, are the tomb of the greatest part of those who labour in them; which enervate, emaciate, and condemn to a languishing life those who are not stifled in their bosom; which destroy the germ of all the social and domestic virtues; which banish all regard to order and economy; which support debauchery and dissipation, with all the vices that follow in their train; and which, when they are exhausted, substitute poverty for prodigality; vagrancy, for labour; and disgorge into society the workmen whom they employed, without any other resource than to choose between beggary or robbery.

It gives me pleasure to have it in my power to observe, that, if these provinces have not enjoyed nor are ever probably destined to enjoy, the transient lustre which the mines confer, they are amply, very amply, indemnified by the abundant, precious, and inexhaustible productions of a soil, which on account of its fertility, and extent, will become the constant abode of ease and happiness, and that too, when those countries, which boast of their mines, will present but rubbish, ruins, and frightful excavations, the melancholy monuments of departed opulence.

Yet, in the Jurisdiction of St. Philippe, some mines of copper of superior quality are made an object of considerable attention; but they do not

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employ such a number of hands as to cause humanity to groan at the sight of its own degradation, nor to occasion a diversion from the cultivation of the soil, materially prejudicial. The convenience of ready supply, and the low price of this metal, being sold at 15 piastres per quintal, have induced the greater part of the planters who cultivate the cane, to have their boilers, and the cylinders of their mills made of it. There is the greater probability that this example will be universally followed, especially with respect to the boilers, as copper, being more permeable than iron, opposes less resistance to the action of the fire, and consequently the boiling goes on with more promptness in the copper, than in the iron boilers, from which results, at least, a saving of time and fuel. Another reason entitles the copper to a preference: when an iron boiler or cylinder breaks, there is equally a loss of materials and of manufacture, whereas when they are made of copper, the owner suffers a loss amounting to little more than the charges of workmanship.

Besides supplying the local consumption, the copper of those mines has furnished for exportation, from Porto-Cabello, which is the most convenient port, one hundred and seventy-one quintals; and the quantity would be much greater, but for the circumstances of the war.

Pearl Fishery.

On the first discovery of Terra-Firma, the

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pearl fishery formed the most considerable branch of the riches of the country, and of the revenues of the king. It was carried on between the islands of Cubagua and Margaretta, at the expense of the lives of a great number of Spaniards and Indians, who perished in that business, the effects of which are as deplorable as those of the mines. The island of Cubagua is but a barren track, without water and without wood. It was the first abode chosen by the Spaniards, and avarice alone could render it supportable. It becomes a subject of congratulation, that certain circumstances, which seem to accord with a great design of providence in making the inhabitants of Venezuela an agricultural people, caused them to abandon the pearl fishery, which they never after resumed. Nay, it is pretended, that the pearls have disappeared from the eastern coast, and the first place on the leeward where that fishery is carried on with some success, is a bay situated between Cape Chichibacoa and Cape de la Vela, occupied by the Guihiros Indians, who sell their pearls to the Dutch and English.

Salt.

The whole coast north of the province of Venezuela furnishes a considerable quantity of salt, of a beautiful whiteness; but the most abundant salt-pits that of Araya, which may vie with all those of America, not even excepting Turks Island. That salt-pit consists of a mixture of the fossil and marine salts. Its working is very little attended to; so that it does not yield the one hundredth part

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of the quantity it is capable of producing. It will appear, from the chapter on the imposts, that the king causes the salt to be sold on his own account, or commits the concern to others. The smallness of the revenue arising from it will appear astonishing.

Mineral Waters.

These provinces abound in mineral waters, both warm and cold. They are to be found here of various qualities, such as the ammoniacal, the ferruginous, the nitrous, and even the acidulous. Medicine does not derive from them all the advantages they are capable of affording, because, in general, they are at too great a distance from inhabited places, and consequently the patient cannot, without depriving himself of those domestic attentions which contribute so much to the recovery of health, leave his own habitation to try a remedy which local inconveniences must evidently render inefficacious. This is the only reason which causes these springs to be so little frequented, and even so little known.

Some of these waters have a degree of heat which approaches to that of boiling water. Those that are upon the old way leading from Porto Bello to Valencia, rise to the 72d degree; and another spring in the vallies of Aragua is still hotter.

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Seasons.

The year is not divided in this part of South America, as it is in Europe. Neither spring nor autumn are known here, except from books. Winter and summer complete the whole year. It is neither cold nor heat which marks their distinctive boundaries, but rain and drought. To what is called winter is assigned the interval of time between the months of April and November, which is precisely the rainy season; to summer, the six remaining months, during which the rains are less frequent, sometimes even rare.

Rains.

The quantity of rain which falls in the provinces of Venezuela, Cumana, and Guiana, is nearly equal. The plains, mountains, and vallies participate the blessings and inconveniences of the rains, which, however, are not without intermission. There are days when not a drop falls; there are others, but not frequent, when it rains incessantly. It may be calculated that, one day with another, it rains for the space of three hours, and oftener in the evening than in the morning. All this is to be understood of the rainy season.

The drizzling rains of the polar regions are never seen here; but notwithstanding that, the sudden heavy falls of the torrid zone, the discharges from the water-spouts rushing down with the violence of a torrent, produce more water in one single day, than the

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rains of Europe do in six. Besides, it is sufficient to consider that the country which I describe, lies entirely beyond the 11th degree of north latitude, stretching towards the equator, and that the total quantity of the equinoctial rains, are estimated at ten times that of the arctic and antarctic rains, to make it appear less surprising when we see that all the rivers remain in a state of inundation during the greater part of the rainy season; that those extraneous channels formed by the violence of the floods, which remain dry the rest of the year, become torrents; and that they are covered with water to an immense distance, where the traveller descries only the tops of the tallest trees, which then serve him for land-marks. This kind of accidental sea is principally formed in the northern plains of the Oronoko, and in a space extending one hundred and fifty leagues in length and forty in breath.

Earthquakes.

It is a remak made by all the inhabitants of these provinces, that the rains, before 1792, were accompanied with lightnings and terrible claps of thunder, and that since that period, till 1804, the rain falls in great abundance, without any of the usual accompaniments of a storm. It appears, that the atmospheric electricity has been attracted and accumulated in that mass of matter which forms the Cordilleras, and to this cause is to be ascribed the earthquakes, which were experienced at Cumana in the month of December, 1797, and whose ravages have been so great.

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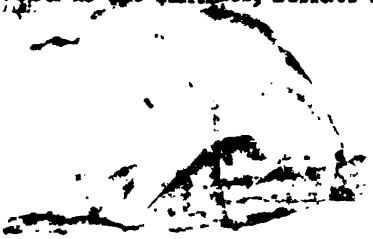
They had not felt any of these commotions since 1778 and 1779.

This part of South America, although placed between the Antilles, where earthquakes are so frequent, and Peru, where they are still more frequent, enjoys, in the midst of this agitated country, intervals of repose, which would border upon the miraculous, if it did not depend on a circumstance happily in its favour, namely, that its air being less rarefied, gives less action to electricity, and that its soil contains in its bosom a smaller portion of the principles of fermentation and combustion.

On the 1st May, 1802, at eleven o'clock in the evening, there was a pretty strong shock felt at Caraccas, with oscillation from west to east. On the 20th of the same month, at five minutes past four o'clock in the evening, there was another of a vertical direction, which lasted one minute, nor did the earth resume its horizontal level, for two minutes afterwards. On 4th July following, at forty-eight minutes past two o'clock in the morning, two strong shocks were felt; on the same day, at thirty-five minutes past six in the morning, there was another not so strong. The causes and local origin of the earthquakes appear to be in the province of Cumana; for they are there more violent than elsewhere. *(See Cumana, in the chapter containing the description of the cities.)*

Timber for building.

The mountains of Venezuela produce the same kinds of wood as the Antilles, besides a great many



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others, which are peculiar to them. The vast forests which cover them would be capable of furnishing, for ages, the most extensive ship-yards, with an abundant supply of timber, if the roughness of the mountains did not render the labour of cutting and conveyance too difficult and too expensive for a country, whose navigation does not receive sufficient encouragement to enable it to support its own expense.

It is twenty years since the king ordered arrangements to be made in the province of Cumana for the felling of wood to supply his European arsenals. This work did not last long; but it did not cease so much on account of any scarcity of wood, as on account of the immense expenses which accompany every undertaking in which the king is concerned. When an occasion of this kind presents itself, every overseer always forms, and very frequently realizes, schemes of making his fortune, in consequence of which the state is often ruined by the operations which enrich individuals.

All the timber which is consumed in the port for the refitting, and even for the building of vessels, is transported by the rivers of Tocuyo and Yaraqui, to Porto Cabello, situated fifteen leagues to the windward.

A little more to the windward of the mouth of the Tocuyo, in the latitudes of the small Tucacas islands, the proximity of wood facilitates the establishment of yards, but the want of demand causes that resource to be neglected. At Maracaibo, they use for building, timber of superior quality to that

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of Terra Firma; accordingly the yards of that city are constantly busy; and would be still more so, if the bar permitted the egress of ships of a larger size.

Timber for Carpenter-Work.

Carpenters and Cabinet-makers find likewise in these mountains materials so various as to embarrass them in the choice. In general, they use the wood which the Spaniards call Pardillo, for beams, joists, door-frames, and posts, &c. In some places, instead of the Pardillo, a species of very hard oak is used, which is the Quercus Cerus of Linnæus, and the Quercus Gallifer of Tournefort.

Timber for Cabinet-Work.

Cabinet-makers make great use of Cedar for doors, windows, tables, and common chairs, &c. For ornamental furniture, they have at hand several kinds of wood susceptible of the highest polish. Among these is distinguished the black ebony, found in the greatest abundance in several places, but particularly upon the banks of the Totondoy, which falls into the lake Maracaibo. It is there that nature seems to have placed the nursery of those trees which are most subservient to the necessities, the pleasure, and the caprice of man. Yellow ebony is very common in the forests of Terra Firma; so likewise is red ebony.—The Spaniards call the black ebony, ebano; the yellow, palo amarillo; the red, granadillo. Minute accuracy obliges me to observe, that from one of

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those causes which philosophy has not yet explored among the secrets of nature, mahogany in Terra Firma is not so abundant as it is in that part of St. Domingo which Spain ceded to France, nor can it bear any comparison with respect to its shades or gloss.

Timber for particular Uses.

For works which require extraordinary hard wood they employ iron-wood, the Ybera puterana of Marcgrave.

It is used for the shafts of the wheels of water-mills, for the rollers with which the cylinders are jointed for pressing the sugar canes, &c. &c. This kind of wood is common through the whole of Terra Firma, excepting in the vallies of Aragoa, where, on account of the clearing of the lands, it is a little farther distant. The wood which the Spaniards call granadillo, or red ebony, is applied to the same uses as the iron-wood, and it surpasses even that wood in hardness.

Wood for Dyeing.

No wood is as yet furnished here fit for dyeing, except Brasil-wood, which grows in abundance between la Victoria and St. Sebastian de los Reyes, and the fustic, which is more common than any where else in the environs of Maracaïbo, and yet the quantity furnished is far from being considerable. The inhabitants of Merida fix all kinds of colours without the assistance of any foreign drug. But the more those immense forests which have

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been till now the exclusive domain of ferocious animals and venomous reptiles, are penetrated, the more new productions will undoubtedly be discovered to enrich the arts, and to extend commerce.

Medical Plants, Gums, Resins, and Oils.

This observation is particularly applicable, when we come to speak of the gums, resins, roots, barks and plants, whose virtues are acknowledged in medicine. It would be a desirable object that medical men, under the appointment and pay of government, should be sent to explore a country where nature has been so prodigal of her favours.

There would undoubtedly result from their researches and experiments, infinite advantages to mankind, as well as a considerable augmentation of the articles of exchange, which would prove very beneficial to the inhabitants of the country, for at present, they have hardly any commodity which they can bring to market but the cacao oil; and it is only in the province of Cumana that they have carried this branch of manufacture so far as to leave a pretty considerable surplus to pass into the hands of the merchant, after allowing for local consumption.— Amidst the immensity of other vegetable productions which would be amply sufficient to supply all the pharmacy of Europe, in 1796, there was exported, by the port of Guayra, the only one then permitted to trade directly with the mother country, but four hundred and twenty-five pounds of sarsaparilla, although the plains and vallies were covered with it;

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five hundred pounds of tamarinds, which are every where to be found; and two hundred and thirty-nine pounds of Jesuit's Bark, which, it must be allowed, is not so common.

It is true, that this carelessness carries with it the appearance of a wilful diminution; for according to the account of exports from the same port of Guayra for the year 1798, it appears that the neutral vessels, which were admitted there, in consequence of the war, shipped three thousand six hundred and seventy-four pounds of sarsaparilla, and three thousand four hundred pounds of resin. In 1801, there were shipped from Porto Cabello two thousand three hundred and ninety four pounds of sarsaparilla and forty-seven thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine of gum guaiacum. But these articles and their quantities are altogether unworthy of notice, when compared with those which are to be found in the provinces of Caraccas.

Lakes.

As the description of a country should embrace whatever tends to give an accurate idea of it, we must not neglect to make mention both of the lakes, which are formed by the rains, and those which are the mere reservoirs of the rivers, whose waters they receive. A great number of the first kind are to be seen in the low-lands in the vicinity of the Oronoko. The two greatest of the second kind are those of Maracaibo and Valencia, both well deserving a particular description.

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Lake of Maracaïbo.

The lake of Maracaïbo continues to retain the name of the cacique who ruled there. It is nearly of the form of a decanter, lying from south to north with its neck communicating with the sea. Its length from the bar to its most southern recess, is, according to Oviedo, fifty leagues; its greatest breadth thirty; and its circumference upwards of a hundred and fifty. This great lake may have owed its formation to the slow and gradual excavation occasioned by numerous rivers which flowing from east, west, and south, here terminate their course. The progress of these streams may probably have been arrested when the reservoir had acquired sufficient magnitude and elevation of surface to resist the shock of the conflicting waters and give their currents a direc tions towards the sea.

This lake is easily navigated, and carries vessels of the greatest burden. All the produce and provisions of the interior, intended for consumption or shipping at Maracaïbo, are conveyed by the rivers which discharge themselves into it. Hurricanes are not frequent on this lake, yet there is always a kind of undulation on the surface of the water, proportioned to the degree of excitement which its extent leaves in the power of the winds, and when strong breezes prevail, particularly from the northward, its waves are sufficiently agitated to bury under them the canoes and small craft. It is then only that the waters of the sea forcing their way towards the lake, give a brackish

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taste to it as far as Maracaïbo; for at all other times it is fresh and fit for drinking as far as the sea. The baths which are used there, and which the intense heat of the country renders indispensable, are attended with very salutary effects.

The tide is more perceptible on the borders of the lake than on the neighbouring coasts; it appears that this is to be ascribed to the waters of the lake itself, and not to those of the sea. It would indeed be reasonable to suppose that if it was caused by the sea, it would have on its shores a higher tide than in the lake, inasmuch as the remotest part of the lake is at the distance of fifty leagues, and the salt water would enter the lake, whereas it does not.

All the different kinds of fish furnished by the rivers of South America abound in this lake. The tortoise alone, by a remarkable singularity, is not found here.

To the north-east of the lake, in the most barren part of the borders, and in a place called Mena, there is an inexhaustible mine of mineral pitch, which is the true natural pessaphalte. *(pix montana)* When mixed with suet it is used for graving vessels.

The bituminous vapours which are exhaled from this mine are so easily inflamed, that during the night phosphoric fires are continually seen, which in their effects resemble lightning. It is remarked that they are more frequent in great heat, than in cool weather. They go by the name of the Lantern of Maracaïbo, because they serve for a light-house and compass to the Spaniards and Indians who, without the assistance of either, navigate the lake, and have no other object

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for observation but the sun during the day, and these fires at night. Nature seems purposely to have provided them for the protection and security of navigation.

The sterility, and what is worse, the noxious atmosphere of the borders of the lake, discourage culture and population. The Indians themselves have at all times observed them to be so unhealthy that instead of fixing their abodes there, they preferred dwelling on the lake itself. They chose for the stakes of the huts which they inhabited on the water a very durable kind of wood, of the same species with the iron-wood. According to Oviedo, and the tradition of the country, this wood underwent in a few years, the process of petrifaction, in every part which was under water.

Notwithstanding the pains I have taken to ascertain this fact, I have only been able to see imperfect petrifactions, on which the stamp of time was visibly impressed. It is therefore to be presumed, that this transmutation takes effect in the iron-wood, because being slower in its decay than almost any other species of wood, nature, who is not over hasty in any of her labours, disseminates through the fibres of this durable matrix the primitive moisture, which receives its growth by the laws of affinity. Thus, from this phenomenon, no reason is adduced to alter the established opinion with respect to the slowness of petrifaction.

The Spaniards found on this lake several villages, built without order, without design, but with solidity. On this account they gave them the name of Vene-

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zuela, a diminutive of Venice, which they have not retained, but which has been since applied to the whole province. Alfinger, in the rage of devastation, carried desolation and death amongst those peaceable inhabitants. Only four villages escaped. It was for a long time believed that these small settlements were formed upon the waters, as a protection from ferocious beasts, or some hostile nation. That this idea was erroneous is now apparent from the refusal of the Indians who live on the waters to fix their habitation on land. Those villages, all situated in the eastern part of the island, at unequal distances from one another, are called Lagunillas, Misoa, Tumopora and Moporo. They have a church upon the water, under the care of a curate, who is charged with the distribution of spiritual aid amongst the aquatic Indians. The zeal of the minister who discharges these functions is unequivocal, as it is rare for his health not to be affected within fifteen days after his arrival, and rarer still for his life to be prolonged beyond six months. These Indians go a-shore in search of provisions, but their principal subsistence is derived from fishing.

The hunting of wild-ducks is likewise one of their great resources, and they pursue it in a very singular manner. They always keep some empty calabashes adrift upon the lake, and round their huts, that the habit of seeing them may prevent the ducks from being scared by them. When the Indian wants to lay in provisions, he thrusts his head into an empty calabash, bored in such a manner as to enable him to see without being seen. Thus equipped he swims to the

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place where the ducks are: he then catches them by the legs and whips them under water, before they have time to quack, or make any movement which might warn the rest of the danger which threatens them. The game which he takes he ties to his belt. He never retires without fully supplying his wants. It is much in favour of this sly, silent manner of hunting, that it does not scare the game, that it may be renewed at every moment with the same success and always without expense. The goodness of the soil in the western part, has induced some Spaniards, regardless of the insalubrity of the air, to fix their habitations there, in order to raise cacao and provisions. These settlements, which were very much dispersed, were not able to command sufficient funds for laying the foundation of a village, much less of a city. There is but one chapel, placed nearly in the centre of the scattered habitations, and a curate for performing divine service and administering the sacraments.

The southern extremity of the lake is uncultivated and uninhabited.

The northern part is quite as hot as the other parts, but incomparably healthier. The city of Maracaibo is situated on the left bank to the west; and opposite are two villages, the one called Punta à Piedra, inhabited by Indians, the other Altagracia, occupied by Spaniards upon the left bank. The latter is to the north of the former.

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Lake of Valencia.

The lake of Valencia, by the Indians called Tacarigua, presents a prospect much more agreeable than that of Maracaïbo. It is not indeed so extensive, but is much more useful. Its borders, instead of being struck, like those of Maracaïbo, with that aridity which saddens the soul, and that unhealthy air which conspires to destroy the existence of man, present the delightful view of an attractive fertility, and of an agreeable and far more healthy temperature.

The extent of the lake of Valencia has been differently determined by all those authors who have spoken of it. Oviedo, near a hundred years ago, declared it to be fourteen leagues long and six broad. Cisneros, in 1787, allowed it to be eighteen long and about six broad. The author of the geographical map of the province of Venezuela assigned to it, in 1787, ten Castilian leagues in length and three and a half in breadth. They are as little agreed with respect to its situation, and its influence on culture, as to the space it occupies. Happily for me, I find myself freed from the necessity of blindly adopting any of those opinions, by the concurrent testimony of my own eyes, and that of the intelligent Spaniards who live in the vicinity.

This lake stretches thirteen leagues and a half, from East N. E. to West S. W. and its greatest breadth is four. It has an oblong form. It lies at the distance of one league from Valencia, and is situated in a valley surrounded with mountains, ex-

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cepting on the West, where it extends into the interior of the country.

The waters of twenty rivers are discharged into it without any visible outlet. It is six leagues from the sea, and the space which separates them is filled with inaccessible mountains. It is the more difficult to account for its having no visible passage for discharge, as it receives rivers on all sides, which proves it to be a perfect basin. But, then, how should it have remained the same without increase or diminution of water for so many ages? Would evaporation alone, great as it may be between the tropics, have been adequate to the consumption of so great a quantity as the rivers supply? We must, therefore, suppose, not less out of compliment to human sagacity, than for the honour of natural philosophy, that there exists a subterraneous passage, by which as great a quantity of water is discharged, as is received from the rivers. This opinion, which I only offer as a conjecture, is supported however by probabilities, which give it the appearance of an undeniable truth. It is observed, that the boats which navigate this lake sail with rapidity from the borders to the centre, where the navigator runs the risk of some dangers, but to return to the borders requires more time and trouble. What are we to conclude from this fact, but that there exists at the bottom of the lake an aperture by which the waters are continually discharged? In this manner it may be accounted for why this lake has not increased in proportion to the volume of water it has received. And this supposition, whether true or false, might be assign-

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ed as the cause for the considerable depression, which the waters of the lake experienced a few years since, and which still visibly continues. Were it possible to augment the quantity of water discharged by the subterraneous passage, the phenomenon would immediately be explained. But without having recourse to any occult cause, the reason of that rapid and continual diminution is found in the increased consumption which the inhabitants have made of the waters of the rivers that are discharged into the lake to refresh their plantations. These waters, diffused over a considerable surface, evaporate, or become an elementary principle of vegetation; and are consequently lost to the general reservoir, which, as it receives less water, must necessarily decrease. In proportion as the lake diminishes, it leaves uncovered lands, lands to which the slime, composed of all sorts of substances deposited for ages past, has imparted a prodigious fertility. This new soil the cultivator fondly selects for the application of his anxious cares and the exercise of his laborious industry.

Its eastern part is appropriated to the culture of tobacco for the king's benefit; this tract being divided into five plantations, employs fifteen thousand persons. The remainder of the land gained from the lake is laid out for other kinds of culture.

The birds which constantly abide in the vicinity of the lakes, afford continual delight by the diversity of their species, the vivid colours of their plumage, and the variety of their notes, of which some are exquisitely melodious. The abundance of aquatic

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game which the sportsman finds here, considerably enhances the delightfulness of the abode. But the unfading verdure which embellishes the borders of the lake, and the productions with which they are crowned, inspire sensations which seem spontaneous wherever nature displays her riches with more than ordinary magnificence. The produce which is sent from the borders of the lake, or the rivers which discharge themselves into it, is transported in vessels of different dimensions. The navigation, however, is not very easy, not only from the cause already stated, but from the numerous small islands with which the lake is interspersed making the use of the sail almost impracticable.

Some of these islands are imperceptibly enlarged in proportion to the diminution of the lake. They are inhabited; and that which is called Caratapona contains a population sufficient to raise provisions, fruits, and vegetables for market. It has a spring of water far better than that of the lake, which is very heavy and of a nauseous taste. When examined by the touch it appears to be of the nature of lixivial water. The quantity of vegetable and animal substances which putrify in its bosom must undoubtedly give it that clammy consistence.

There is a much greater quantity than variety of fish in this lake. The fish which the Spaniards call guavina is the most abundant; after that come the bagre or silicus bagre of Linnæus, and the baveuse which the Spaniards call bava (blennius pholis.)

Upon the borders of the lake a great many reptiles are to be seen. Among these are two kinds of li

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zards, which are particularly distinguished. The iguana is what the Spaniards call mattos, of which the Indians and some Spaniards make their most delicious meals. The very thought of an animal which the prejudices of education class among vipers, snakes, serpents, toads, &c. has prevented me from eating it; but I have had frequent opportunites of seeing that neither the Indians nor Spaniards partake of this antipathy. Before I knew any thing of this article of their food, being one day overpowered with the excessive heat upon the border of the lake, I resolved to go and rest myself a few hours in a house inhabited by Indians. A little after my arrival, I saw the Indian chief take his bow and quiver. I asked him what he was going to do; he replied that he was going to see if he could get something for dinner; in an hour after, he came home with a superb iguana, pierced with an arrow, and agreeing in every respect with the description given of it by Valmont de Bomare. The good Indian kindly invited me to partake of it. My refusal appeared at first to mortify him; but after I had explained the grounds of my objection, he excused me with a laugh. The lizard was immediately stripped of its skin, and boiled, and its flesh was all that the whole family had for dinner. Thus nature accommodates the taste of man to the state in which she places him.

Rivers.

After we have spoken of lakes, the order of description naturally leads us to the article of rivers. It is an obvious conjecture, that in so mountainous

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a country, where rains are so abundant, the waters must have opened for themselves a multiplicity of channels, in order to be conveyed into the space assigned by the Creator, to the third element. Every part of Terra Firma which the plan of my history embraces, is indeed so abundant in rivers, that it is difficult to find any other country equally blessed with the means of fertilizing the soil. Every valley has its rivers, large or small, and if they have not a sufficient quantity of water to make them navigable, yet they have more than enough to afford a copious supply to a hundred times the number of their present plantations, besides what is necessary for other branches of business. All those which wind their course from the chain of mountains are discharged into the sea, and run from south to north, whilst those which spring from the southern declivity of these same mountains, traverse, in a southern direction, the whole extent of the intermediate plain, till they augment with their tributary streams that of the majestic Oronoko.

The former are generally so strongly fenced in by the natural barriers of their banks, and so happily favoured in their progress by the declivity of their channels, as seldom to overflow, and when they do, their overflowings are neither long nor detrimental. The latter having their courses through smoother grounds, and in shallower beds mingle their waters during a great part of the year, and resemble rather a sea than rivers that have overflowed their banks.

The reader surely does not expect that I should tire his patience by entering into minute details with

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respect to every individual river: I think I do enough to gratify his curiosity, by giving cursory sketches with respect to the most considerable of them, reserving for the particular description of Guiana, whatever is to be said of the celebrated Oronoko, and of those streams which contribute to its greatness.

From Cape de la Vela, which forms the western limit of Venezuela, to Maracaïbo, there is not one river of any consequence. In the description of the lake of Maracaïbo, we have seen that the channel of its communication with the sea is filled by rivers that water an immense extent of country. We shall be satisfied with what has already been advanced upon this subject.

Guigues.

At sixteen leagues west of Coro, is the river Guigues; it passes by a village called Guigues de la Yglesia six miles from its mouth; it is even navigable as far as that village for canoes and sloops. This navigation is however attended with no advantage, on account of the sterility of the soil.

Tocuyo.

The river Tocuyo discharges itself into the sea twenty-five leagues east of that which has been last mentioned. It takes its source about fifteen leagues south of Carora, upwards of sixty leagues from the sea. It is navigable as far as Banagua, a village situated on its banks at the distance of forty leagues from its mouth. Its vicinity furnishes abundance of timber of the largest size and fit for every kind of building. It would likewise

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serve for the transportation of a considerable quantity of produce, if the indolence of the inhabitants did not neglect the cultivation of lands, whose fertility offers ample encouragement to industry. The tract of country through which this river flows is so disposed as to make it very easy for the husbandman to avail himself of its refreshing waters. The smallest duct produces as much effect as the discharges of the watering pot when regulated according to the most accurate calculation of hydraulics. There are countries where nature has made admirable arrangements, and where art has only to exert itself to be able to effect prodigies, or by neglect of that to render the best arrangements abortive.

Aroa.

The mouth of the Aroa is ten leagues to windward of that of the Tocuyo. It carries canoes to some distance from the sea, but its navigation is neither easy nor beneficial. This is not owing to a shortness of course; for it is upwards of forty leagues long, taking its rise not far from Barquisimeto; but its vicinity is little cultivated, and its channel frequently obstructed.

Yaracuy.

By reascending along the coast, we find at the distance of three leagues from the mouth of the Aroa, that of the Yaracuy. Its source is forty leagues to the south, but it begins only to be of importance two leagues east of St. Phillip. At that point it becomes navigable, and convenient

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for the conveyance of the produce raised in the vallies of St. Philip, and in the plains of Barquisimeto, which is sent by sea to Porto Cabello, which is the nearest port.

Tuy.

From the Yaracuy there is not one river that can be called navigable till you come to the Tuy, which empties itself into the ocean thirty leagues east of the port of Guayra. This river takes its rise from the mountains of San Pedro, ten leagues from Caraccas. Its waters flow into the vallies of Aragoa, between Victoria and Cocuisas; after that it refreshes the vallies of Tacata, Cua, Sabana; of Ocumare, St. Lucia and St. Theresa; and at last becomes more considerable by the junction of Guayra. By this means it is rendered navigable, and serves for the transportation of produce, in which all these vallies abound, but principally in Cacao, which is there of the best quality. Of all the rivers in the district of the captain-generalship of Caraccas, this is indisputably that which waters the greatest quantity of commercial productions. In 1803 the consulate of Caraccas, ordered a draught of it to be taken by D. Pedro Caranza, a skilful pilot, then residing at Caraccas, as they had it in contemplation to clear and repair its bed, and to prevent, by such works as their ingenuity could devise, all the evils which are occasioned by its inundations.

Unara.

On leaving the Tuy, no river to windward fixes

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the attention of the traveller till he reaches Unara.—This river serves for a line of division between the governments of Caraccas and Cumana. It is navigable as far as the village of San Antonia de Clarinas six leagues from the sea. Its course extends to about thirty leagues from south to north.

Neveri.

The Neveri is seventeen leagues east of the Unara; It takes its rise in the mountains of Brigantin, twenty leagues south of the place where it discharges itself. The waters of the different rivers which it receives in its course, and the declivity of the ground through which it passes, give it such a powerful body and current of water, as shipping cannot withstand till you come to Barcelona, or a little above it.

Manzanares.

As we pursue our way along the coast to the east, we are stopt at ten leagues from the mouth of the Neveri by the Manzanares, which washes the city of Cumana; and it is from this circumstance alone that it deserves to be mentioned, for its navigation is of no consequence, carrying but sloops from the sea to Cumana, which is only at the distance of a quarter of a league. Yet by its refreshing stream it fertilizes lands otherwise sterile, which by this means are enabled to yield fruits and vegetables in abundance, besides some other articles of produce.

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Cariaco.

After Cumana comes the gulf of Cariaco, which is joined by several streams and a river of the same name, from which culture derives considerable advantages. It passes by a city to which they vainly wished to give the name of St. Philippe d'Autriche. Regardless of the government, it took and retained the name of the gulf which is at the distance of two leagues from it. It is only to this city that the river is navigable, and not always even so far; for, as it receives a considerable quantity of rain water, it wants water in dry weather; and it is subject in rainy weather to inundations which are very inconvenient to the city. The Guayqueris Indians have a tradition that the gulf of Cariaco was formed by an earthquake. (See the article Cumana in the chapter of the description of the cities.)

Over all the northern coast as far as the Cape of Paria, which, with the Isles of the Dragons, forms the great entrance of the Gulf of Paria, there exists not a single navigable river. Several are discharged into the Gulf; the most considerable of which is the Guarapiche, which springs from the eastern declivity of Mount Brigantin. It swells with the waters of numerous streams, which deserve the name of rivers; so that, at its entrance into the Gulf, it has the majestic appearance of a river of the first rank. Vessels of ordinary size ascend on its tides as far as the Fork of Fantarma. They are prevented from advancing farther, not so much on account of the

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shallowness of its waters, as the embarrasments which its navigation suffers from the mangroves and the trees, which are thrown into it by the winds, or deposited by the currents. These obstacles would quickly disappear, if the country produced commodities for exportation; but this land, so abundantly rich in the latent treasures of fertility, is not cultivated, because to man in a state of nature the greatest luxury is the wild fruits of the forest.

All these rivers, joined by the waters of an infinite number of others, do not make even the twentieth part of those which proceed directly to the sea, and water only what may be called the high or northern part of the provinces of Venezuela and Cumana. The low or southern part of Venezuela is intersected by rivers, which flow from north to south, till they discharge themselves into the great Oronoko. The most considerable are the Mamo, the Pariagoan and Pao, the Chivata and Zoa, the Cachimamo, the Aracay, the Manapira and Espino, together with the Apura, which enters the Oronoko by several channels; it receives into its waters those of an infinite number of rivers, which altogether forming as it were the figure of a fan occupy a space of upwards of thirty leagues south of the province of Venezuela. The greatest part of these last rivers are navigable forty or fifty leagues from the place, where they together with the Apura discharge themselves into the Oronoko. This statement alone is sufficient to enable us to anticipate the prospect of that distinguished prosperity which nature destines for Gui-

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ana. (*See the Chapter upon Spanish Guiana*) After treating of the rivers, historical order naturally leads us to the sea ports of the provinces I have undertaken to describe.

Sea.

The sea which washes these coasts is by the English called the Caribbean sea, because in fact the chain of the Antilles, from Trinidad to Cuba and Terra Firma, form an area bounded solely by the countries anciently occupied by the Caribbees. We know not why other European nations have declined to adopt that denomination, so proper to designate a part of the globe which they now know only by the vague appellation of the Northern Sea. Have we not given to the sea different names according to the different countries which it washes. Do we not say the Adriatic Sea, the Candian Sea, the Scotch or Caledonian Sea, the Irish Sea, the Cimbric Sea, &c? Why, then, in order the better to designate the part of which we speak, do we not say the Caribbean Sea?

Tides.

Over all the northern coast from Cape de la Vela to Cape Paria, the tides are so irregular and imperceptible as to be entirely overlooked in the reckonings and calculations of the navigator; whilst on all the eastern coast from the last mentiond cape to Dutch Guiana they are so powerful as to command rigid observance from the ships which frequent those latitudes. It is evident that the bearings of the coasts are the only cause of that singularity.

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Winds.

The winds are much more regular on the coasts, where nothing deranges their natural direction, than in the inland parts, where they are subjected to local influence. The common breeze on the coasts is the same which prevails at sea between the tropics, known under the name of trade-winds. They blow from N. E. by E. There is, however, this difference, that at sea these winds are constant, whereas upon the coasts, they only blow from nine or ten o'clock in the morning till the evening. They are succeeded every night by an opposite wind, which is called the land breeze. This periodical succession is general, but not without exceptions.

Worms or Tarets.

All the sea-ports of which I have spoken, are infested with that species of worms, called Tarets, which are said to have been brought from the Antilles into Europe. It is true, they are so abundant there, that there is no road, nor river, which receives the salt-water, but swarms with them. A ship, not secured by a copper-bottom cannot remain for any considerable time in any of those ports without being injured by these worms, and even rendered unfit for service. Such as remain in port must be well graved once in every three or four months, otherwise they must perish upon the hands of the owners.

Surge.

Another inconvenience common to all the ports of the province of Caraccas is, that they are con-

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tinually exposed to rolling seas, to those monstrous billows, which though they by no means appear to be occasioned by the winds, are not upon that account the less inconvenient, nor frequently the less dangerous. The road of Porto-Cabello is the only place which affords a safe and quiet retreat to the navy, where vessels can lie quietly, and the mariners be free from care.

Ports.

Let us now take a particular view of every port, in the same order in which we have described the navigable rivers.

Porteta and Bayahonda.

Six leagues east of Cape de la Vela, is a port called Porteta, which admits small vessels only; but four leagues farther to the windward is that of Bayahonda, where vessels of the largest size can enter and anchor, without being exposed to the smallest danger from the winds; the anchorage in both these ports is excellent, but being in possession of the Indians, they are of no advantage to the Spaniards. Here let me observe, by the bye, that these Indians employ themselves in the pearl-fishery in the road of Bayahonda, from which they derive the only article they have to barter with the Dutch and English.

Maracaibo.

The first port we meet, as we proceed along the coast to the eastward is that of Maracaibo. A bar of quicksand, which is but ten or twelve feet under water, entirely excludes large vessels, and with diffi-

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culty admits small ones; he must be well acquainted with his business, and extremely attentive to his duty, who attempts to enter this port without a pilot. As soon as he clears the bar, he has plenty of water, and a good harbour.

Coro.

As you travel farther to the east, you only meet with landing places at different distances from one another, till you come to Coro, whose port lies open from north to north-east. One may anchor as far in as he chuses, because the water continues to deepen, in proportion as he approaches the shore. Neither its accommodations, nor commodities, make it a port of great resort.

*Porto Cabello.**

Between Coro and Porto-Cabello, there are none that deserve the name of ports. But we are now come to the best, not only on this coast, but in all America. The bay of Porto-Cabello is spacious, handsome, commodious, and safe. It is capable of affording anchorage to the whole of the Spanish navy. It is defended against the fury of the winds, from whatever quarter they blow. The land which encompasses it on the south, east, and west, is so happily disposed by nature, as to baffle the impetuosity of the north-east wind, which is so common there. So little does this bay partake of those agitations which continually prevail with more or less violence in the tropical seas, that it resembles a pond more than a port. The name given it by the Spa-

* Better known by the name of Porto Bello.

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niards is expressive of the advantages which it so eminently enjoys, importing that in the harbour of Porto-Cabello a vessel at anchor is more effectually secured by a simple rope, than elsewhere by the strongest cables. The surge, which is no where more common, never disturbs the placid composure of the road. Its anchorage, which owes nothing to art, is so commodious, that the largest ships may lay alongside of the wharf, load and unload without the assistance of lighters. The men of war have no other communication with the land, than by a flying bridge three or four toises long.

Turiamo, Patanemo, Borburata and Sienega.

Three leagues to the windward of Porto-Cabello, is the Bay of Turiamo, which extends one league from north to south. Scarcely any shipping resort to it, because it has no shelter from the north wind, and because the country around it does not afford commodities sufficient to induce merchants to subject navigation to those inconveniences to which it is liable in a port of this description. What has been said of the bay of Turiamo, is equally applicable to those of Patanemo, Borburata, and Sienega. The whole population of each of these bays consists of no more than a small party of soldiers, stationed there to prevent smuggling.

Ocumara.

The bay of Ocumara, five leagues east of Porto-Cabello, is a very good port, and very well sheltered. Its moorings are excellent. The port is defended, on the east, by a battery mounting eight pieces of

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cannon of the calibre of 8 or 12. The village of Ocumara is at the distance of one league from the port. It is watered by a river of the same name, which, after fertilizing its vallies, discharges itself into the same bay at the bottom of the fort.

Between the bay of Ocumara and that of Guayra, are several small ports, where the inhabitants of that coast ship their commodities for Guayra or Porto-Cabello; but none of those ports are of sufficient importance to entitle them to a particular place in this description.

Guayra.

The port of Guayra is more frequented than any other upon the coast, and is, at the same time, the least deserving of such a preference. Its road is always so open to the breeze, that the sea there is kept in a state of continual agitation, and the violence of the winds frequently occasions damage to the ships which ride at anchor. The surge is very prevalent here, which, joined with the winds, contributes greatly to augment the inconveniences of the port. The depth of water does not exceed eight fathoms at the distance of one quarter of a league from the beach. The continual agitation of this road renders loading and unloading tedious, expensive, and difficult; sometimes even impossible. But that is not the only objection which can be made to it; the surge acts with the same violence at the bottom, as on the surface of the water; by which agitation the sand being stirred up and raised from the bottom is carried along by the current, and deposited upon the anchors, till they are in a short time so deeply buried under it, that before

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the expiration of a month, it is impossible to hoist them; they either break their cables, or are under the necessity of cutting them. To avoid the certain loss which would thus be incurred, every vessel is obliged to hoist anchor once every eight days. All that is necessary to be added to the sketch I have already given of this place, is that the worms commit greater ravages here than in any other port.

Caravalleda.

From this wretched port, where we have very little inducement to tarry long, I would willingly repair to the first port on the coast, which would furnish materials for description, if I did not meet in my way at the distance of one league east of Guayra, the site upon which formerly stood the city of Caravalleda.

The cause of its depopulation reflects so much honour on its first inhabitants, that it must be considered as a high breach of duty in the historian to neglect transmitting the knowledge of it to posterity. The city of Caravalleda was founded the 8th of September, 1568, by Diego Losada, who also founded the city of Caraccas. Caravalleda was built on the same spot where Francis Faxardo Losada gave to Caravalleda a cabildo, as was then allowed to all the cities which were founded. The inhabitants had the right of electing their own alcaides annually, through the intervention of the regidors. It was a precious privilege which the king preserved and still preserves for his people. The city of Caravalleda peaceably exercised this sacred right, till in 1586 it

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pleased the governor of the province, Louis de Roxas, by his own private authority, to prohibit the inhabitants from appointing the alcaides for the ensuing year, because he would undertake to appoint them himself. Remonstrances were made, to which no attention was paid. That, however, did not prevent the people, when the usual period of the elections arrived, from proceeding, according to custom, to the choice of the alcaides. Those whom the governor had appointed, presented themselves, but were not received. The abuse of power had so incensed these men, justly jealous of their privileges, that they resolved to support them at every risk. The governor, on the other hand, whom this spirit had violently exasperated, added to the former injustice another still more grievous; for he had the temerity to order the four regidors to be arrested, and cast them into dungeons for having faithfully discharged the duties of their offices.

The inhabitants of Caravalleda regarded this injury as done to themselves individually. They unanimously adopted the laudable resolution of abandoning a city where the law had suffered so unwarrantable an outrage; they all retired to Valencia and Caraccas.—The city which they deserted became the haunt of reptiles and ravenous birds.

In the mean time, the king, conformably to the system which the government has adopted for repressing violations of the laws, censured the conduct of the governor, and inflicted such penalties upon him as appeared sufficient to deter his successors from aiming any new blow at the rights of the king's vassals.

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The regidors were released from confinement, and obtained all the satisfaction that could be reasonably expected. The inhabitants of Caravalleda were invited to repair to their habitations. None of them however thought proper to comply. They replied that they never would live in a country which would be continually reminding them of the offence which they had received. Despairing of being able to repeople Caravalleda, Guayra was made a port of entry and clearance for that part of the province.

Wise and resolute men, who have discovered your sensibility, without having recourse to those extremes which would have dishonoured your cause, let your precious ashes receive the homage of one of your sincerest admirers! Your silent retreat from a place contaminated by the exercise of illegitimate authority, has given a check to usurpation. May your memorable conduct be for ever impressed on the hearts of all men, so as to challenge the admiration of those who rule, and the imitation of those who are destined to obey.

Port Francis.

Between Guayra and Cape Codera, separated by a space of twenty-five leagues, are found seventeen rivers, which, at equal distances, empty themselves into the sea. Upon their respective banks is a great number of cacao and sugar plantations. Before we come to Cape Codera, we meet with a port tolerably good for small craft; its name is Port Francis. As the reasons assigned for this name do not to me appear plausible, I rather forbear specifying them, than risk giving publicity to such as may not be au-

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thentic. From this port the neighbouring inhabitants ship their commodities; and indeed it does not appear to be calculated for any other use.

From Cape Codera, the coast runs to the south-east. At the distance of three leagues is the small port of Aiguerota, which is nothing superior to Port Francis. Like it, it is used only for shipping the commodities of the neighbouring plantations.

Bay or Lake of Tacarigua.

From Higuerota to the river Paparo, a branch of the Tuy, the distance is three leagues; the distance is the same from that to the mouth of the Tuy, which is no more than a league and a half from Lake Tacarigua. This lake must not be confounded with that of Valencia, to which the Indians give the same name. The form of the lake exactly resembles that of a bay, and would certainly have obtained that name, but for a bar of quick-sand, which frequently cuts off its communication with the sea. Its form is circular. It measures about seven leagues from the sea on the north-east, to its deepest recess on the south east. It abounds in all kinds of sea-fish. It is particularly remarkable for the great number of alligators which are seen in it. For twenty-eight leagues on the coast to the eastward, a great variety of rivers appear, whose streams in the rainy season swell into torrents, but in the hot season most of them become extremely shallow, whilst the channels of others are entirely dried up.

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Barcelona.

The first port after that is Barcelona, watered by the Neveri. On ascending on the east side of the river about four miles from its mouth, we observe on an eminence which bears the name of the city, a fort erected for the protection of vessels, which anchor not far from it in a bay so shallow as not to be capable of admitting vessels of considerable size.—This port, if it may be so called, affords no shelter but against the breeze; but at the distance of one league to the north, the island of Borracha, inhabited by fishermen, presents, on its south side, a safe harbour for ships of the largest size.

From the hill of Barcelona, the coast runs to the north-east as far as Cumana, which is at the distance of two leagues. That space is filled with a chain of islands, not far removed from the coast. Some of these are provided with bays and ports, but they are of no great consequence.

Cumana.

Cumana stands about one third of a league from the beach. Since the city has been extended on the western bank, the Manzanares bisects it. But, as has been already observed, it is so shallow as to be navigable only for small craft. Merchantmen anchor on what the Spaniards call the placer, which means a sand-bank under water. This anchoring, suitable for vessels of all descriptions, lies west from the river and directly opposite to a stream called Bordones, about the distance of one league

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from the mouth of the river. From this description of the place, it will readily occur to the reader, that recourse must be had to lighters for loading and unloading. This port has the advantage of being well sheltered against the inclemency of the weather.

The Gulf of Cariaco.

As we proceed to the east of Cumana, the first object which attracts our attention is the gulf of Cariaco, formed by a part of the coast of Cumana, the point of Araya, and the Barrigon. It extends ten leagues from east to west, and is three, in some places four leagues broad. Its depth, at the middle of the gulf, is from 80 to 100 fathoms. Its waters are as placid as those of a lake; the reason is, that it is protected by the mountains which surround it, from all other winds, except the breeze, but to that it is left entirely exposed, and consequently must experience an agitation of its waters proportioned to the strength of the breeze. In this gulf there are three places very convenient for loading, namely, the lake of Eyeco, the Gurintar, and Juanantar.

Point of Araya.

The point of Araya, lying east from the mouth of the river is dangerous for two reasons; because it is low, and because it has, on the north-east, almost on a level with the surface, a sand-bank which advances two leagues into the sea. Yet to this point, the attention of those who arrive from Europe, must be directed, if they wish to make an easy entrance to the port of Cumana. For that purpose it is absolute-

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ly necessary to bear off from the north-east and south-west, till they have doubled the point; then they may coast along the land for half a league.

Straits of Margaretta.

Some small bays and petty ports lie between this point and that of Chacopata. In the same space, towards the north, are the islands of Coche, Cubagua, and Margaretta. The great number of shoals that are here to be encountered, render the navigation of this passage extremely difficult, especially as the channel is very narrow, although sufficiently deep. He ought to be a very expert seamen who ventures to pass it without assistance. The general custom, is to engage a pilot at the port of Pampata of Margaretta to undertake the responsibility of the navigation.

Turning towards the east, we see some ports of inferior note, which are known only as convenient places for shipping commodities, or for the encouragement they afford to smuggling.

Cariaco is the only one that might be frequented by large vessels, but the want of population, and the consequent scarcity of territorial productions, renders it absolutely useless.

Gulf of Paria.

Continuing our route to the east, we arrive at the Gulf which the Spaniards call Triste, but which I, joined by the French, shall call Paria, believing myself the more justifiable in so doing, as the whole coast of Terra Firma, which surrounds that Gulf, is

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called Paria: Besides, what the French and English geographers understand by the Gulf Triste is that extent of sea which lies between Point Hicacos and Cape Codera, which is almost of the same magnitude and form as the gulf of Gascony. It is much to be regretted that geographers have not, by the consent of all nations, established an uniformity in the names of every part of the globe. For the want of such a standard of geographical nomenclature, a Frenchman who speaks of the gulf of Paria to a Spaniard, is not understood; a Spaniard, who speaks to a Frenchman or Englishman, labours under the same disadvantage; and yet they both speak of the same gulf.

The gulf of Paria has Terra Firma on the west and Trinidad on the east. From these two lands on the north, two points jut out, between which lie two islands, with regard to these two points, pretty nearly east and west, so as to close the gulf on the north, leaving, however, a sufficient space between them to form four openings, called the mouths of the Dragon, by which it discharges the superfluous waters. The largest, being two leagues broad, is that on the west between Point Paria of Terra Firma and the island of Chacachacares; on the west it is interspersed with rocks; but as they are all visible, and may be approached without danger, the navigator may easily keep clear of them. This is not the case with a rock which just emerges from the surface at two cables length from the island of Chacachacares; its approach would be attended with some risk. Between the last island and that of Navios is a second mouth smaller than the first, called the vessels. Its

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channel lying from N. to S. E. renders it very good for the going out, but very bad for the entrance of ships. The third is formed by the isle of Navios on the W. and that of Monas on the E. It is called the mouth of Huevos *(Egg's Mouth)*. Its direction is from N. N. E. to S. S. E. It is much more convenient to enter than to go out. The fourth is between that island and the point that is most to the W. S. W. of the island of Trinidad. It is called the mouth de Los Monos, *(Monkey's Mouth)* without doubt, because it is narrower, and more difficult, on account of a rock in the middle of it, which, from its position, occasions a continual commotion, at the same time that the land of Trinidad, by excluding the winds, preserves a calm, which is but rarely interrupted by momentary gusts. The passage for small craft lies between the island of Trinidad and the rock.

This gulf is twenty-five leagues from east to west, and fifteen from north to south; there is anchorage in all that extent, but its depth varies from eight to thirty fathoms. Upon the coast of Paria its soundings are much less. In fact this gulf is a real port, which for excellence and extent, vies with the handsomest in the world. It has a muddy bottom except near the coast of Terra Firma, where there are shoals and banks of sand.

Some authors, not very reputable for their accuracy, have asserted that the waters of this gulf are fresh. I attest that they are as salt as those of the sea. It receives, on the S. S. W. a considerable volume of water by different mouths of the Oronoko,

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which enters it with a velocity that very much incommodes the vessels which steer that way upon their passage. There is some reason to believe that a part of those waters of the Oronoko have in the progress of ages, detached from Terra Firma what is at present called Trinidad, and that their ravages will not cease, till they have opened the mouths of the Dragon and thrown themselves into the ocean. Indeed, the currents are always carried to the sea by the channels of these mouths. It is therefore impossible to enter, particularly by the small ones, unless highly favoured by the winds.

It is at least as difficult to enter the gulf on the south as it is on the north. The wind must be from the south-east, to be able to enter with any certain prospect of safety; then they must coast it to the south of the island of Trinidad as far as point Hicacos, which they must approach within two cables' length, in order to pass between that point and a shoal, which is in the middle of the channel formed by the small island of Soldado and the same point. After advancing two-thirds of a league to the north, they may approach within one league of the coast to the west of Trinidad, till they come to anchorage in the port of Spain. For there is mooring there to the distance of two leagues from the coast with water from five to eighteen fathoms deep.

There are several ports and roads along the coast of Paria which greatly facilitate the communication with Trinidad. That advantage is at present exclusively in favour of the English, who are the possessors of that island.

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The tide is not only perceptible, but even formidable in the gulf of Paria, where it discovers a violence not to be conceived by those who are not well acquainted with the great ebbings and flowings of the sea.

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CHAP. III.

POPULATION, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

Want of an exact census—Census made annually by the curates Division of the population—Difficulties which the Spaniards experience in going to America—Those which foreigners experience are still greater—Mortifications which foreigners incur, who settle in the Spanish possessions—Hardly any emigration from Spain to Terra Firma.—Attachment of the Creoles to their country—Public education—Aptitude of the Creoles for science—Reform in their costume—Habit of the afternoon nap—Marriages—The Spaniards marry very young—The power of the Parents over their children is less than in other countries—Happy reform—Causes of unhappy marriages—Apparent submission of the children to the parents—Etiquettes—Their bad effects—The Spaniards are religious—Extremely prudent in their undertakings—Conspiracy of Venezuela—Causes—Formed by three state-prisoners—Its discovery—Measures of government—Honourable act of Charles IV.—Prosecution by the tribunals—Reflections on that conspiracy—Slaves—The Spaniards do not carry on the slave-trade—Number of slaves—How they are treated—Every thing is done to make them good christians—Carelessness of the masters with respect to the wants of the slaves—Reforms contemplated—Advantages which the laws offer to slaves—Freed-men—Their number—Restrictions imposed on their freedom—Causes of these restrictions—The freed-men can hold no public office—The law subjects them to an impost, which they do not pay—Sumptuary laws with respect to freed-men—Case, where the freed-man forfeits his freedom—The king gives dispensation for colour—Marriages between white persons and those of colour—Some are yet to be seen among men of colour and whites—That is owing to the horrid practice of exposing illegitimate children—The necessity of an hospital for foundlings—Freed-men are allowed to practise physic.

Want of an exact Census.

AFTER the most diligent researches, I have not been able to procure a correct statement of the population of the provinces dependent on the captain-generalship of Caraccas. In the Archives of goverment no papers are deposited by which it appears that any census has ever been taken of the inhabitants of a country subject to its authority. The registers of the intendancy are also altogether unprovided with those documents, which in all political establishments are most carefully preserved, as the most essential provision to form the basis of an en-

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lightened administration. It was not till I had sacrificed much time and labour, that I discovered that the ecclesiastical authority performed in favour of religion what the civil authority had neglected in favour of political economy. The active interference of a friend, whose name it is painful for me to be under an obligation to conceal, speedily procured for me, from the official records of the bishop, statements of the population of Caraccas for the years 1800 and 1801, particularly specifying that of cities, towns, and villages. But the opportunity which I have had of observing by what process these statements were acquired, left an impression on my mind which did not permit me for a moment to hesitate what degree of credit I ought to attach to to their accuracy. Their nature and object will be discerned from the particulars which are here subjoined.

Census taken annually by the Curates.

In the Spanish domains the duties of religion are not left as in all other christian countries, to the discretion and conscience of the faithful. The ministers of the church exercise, in this respect, a superintendence which extends to all religious practices, but principally to the annual confession. Whoever fulfils the paschal duty, receives from the confessor a small ticket, upon which is written the year; after that this single word *confeso*, together with the signature of the priest. At church, when they receive the sacrament, they present to the curate the ticket of confession, which he keeps; he then gives another signed by himself, and under the year is

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written the word *comulgo;* he has received the sacrament.

In Lent, the curate, or one of his superiors, goes round to each house, takes down all the persons who are or are not arrived at the age necessary to make confession. After Easter is passed, the same priest, or another in his behalf, returns to their houses to take up the communion, or at least the confession ticket, and on closely comparing the number of tickets with that of the persons whose names he had marked down on his first visit, he detects frauds, and proceeds accordingly. This ungracious custom, which creates aversion instead of attachment to the tribunal of penitence, is a temptation to try every expedient to impose on the pastor. Old women during Easter go divers times to confession and receive a ticket each time. They reserve one for themselves and sell the rest. Their ordinary price is one dollar; it rises in proportion as the term of exhibition approaches. Those who can conveniently leave their homes choose the very season when the confession-tickets are to be collected, to indulge themselves in excursions on business or pleasure. Others, on the first visit of the curate, inform only against a part of those who live in the house, or compose the family; finally, there are some who, on the approach of the collecter, shut their doors and leave him to knock till some neighbour informs him that nobody is at home.

Had I undertaken to prove the inutility of the precautions which are taken to make good christians,

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the subject would furnish matter for a long dissertation; but my object is to show, that the census which occasioned them, is imperfect. Indeed, according to the comparison which I have made of it with the population of cities accurately calculated, it appears that it contains one fourth, or beyond all doubt, one fifth less than the real number of inhatants. Yet the government is so strongly persuaded, that no better means can be adopted, that on the king's requiring, in 1801, a statement of the population of the Captain-generalship of Caraccas, no other arrangement was made than to transmit the order to the bishops, who would execute it according to the established custom, so as to be liable to those imperfections which we have endeavoured to point out.

Division of the Population.

Thus, after all the information I have endeavoured to procure, I am authorised to allow

	Souls.
To the Province of Venezuela, including Varinas, a population of	500, 000
To the Government of Maracaïbo	100, 000
To that of Cumana	80,000
To Spanish Guiana	34,000
To the isle of Margaretta	14,000
Total,	728,000

In this population the whites are computed at two tenths, the slaves at three, the descendants of freedmen at four, and the Indians compose the remainder.

This population, upon a soil whose fertility and extent might not only subsist, but enrich a hundred

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times the number, is certainly extremely moderate. That the portion of Europeans which it contains may not appear inconsiderable on a comparative view, reflect only on the small population of the mother country from which it is supplied; on the vast possessions of the Spaniards abroad, which are settled by emigration from the mother country; on the national passion for money, which attracts to Mexico and Peru all the Spaniards whom avarice tempts from Europe; on the imaginary misfortune attached to the provinces of Caraccas, because, to men whose darling object is bullion, it only affords the slow periodical and diversified productions of a land which demands toil and perseverance; and, finally, on the restrictions which the Spanish government are obliged to impose upon the passage of Europeans to the West-Indies, in order to prevent the depopulation of the ancient territories.

Difficulties which Spaniards experience in going to America.

No person is allowed to embark for Spanish America without obtaining permission from the king, which is never granted but for commercial purposes, duly verified, and for a time commonly limited to two years. For a permanent establishment it is very difficult to obtain permission. Priests and friars are equally subjected to the same formality. The creoles who make a temporary residence in Spain, cannot return to their property and relations without the express permission of the king. This pro-

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hibition extends to the female sex. Women must apply for the royal permsision, and married women cannot obtain it, except in company with their husbands. This system, as appears, is entirely opposite to that of other countries, who leave their colonies so unreservedly open to all who wish to go to them, that these establishments have been regarded rather as the foul receptacles of all the impurities of the mother country, than objects of deliberate predilection. About thirty years ago, if a young man discovered any alarming symptoms of depravity in his conduct, he was threatened by his parents with being sent off to the colonies; and the common mode of proceeding was to apply to the public authority, in order to be able to execute the threat. We have seen decrees passed in France to commute corporal punishments for transportation to the colonies. Even in our own days it is a fact of very recent occurrence, that members of the legislative body and directory, victims of the faction then ruling, have been transported to Cayenne, as an equivalent for the punishment of death, which it would have been extremely dangerous for their enemies to inflict. From this view the reflection will naturally arise, that if the French colonies are not become the seats of immorality, it is because the persons who were supposed to be depraved, were not so, or that their number being absorbed in the great mass of laborious, upright and loyal men, with whom they were incorporated, and yielding to the reforming influence of a more virtuous

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society, changed the habit of vice for that of industry, and the practice of knavery for that of probity.

Spain, more just or more tender towards her colonies, although without any pretensions to superior happiness in her domestic concerns, has always directed, and still continues to direct, her whole attention to preserve the purity of their morals and prevent them from receiving the taint of European corruption. From the 7th of August, 1584, no person has been permitted to go to the West Indies, unless he could present authentic information with respect to his morals and good behaviour.

Nay, it is not very long since a person who had his passport for a particular province, was obliged to repair to it directly; and could not, without a new permission from the king, go to a province subject to another government. The Europeans who take their departure from Spain for the province of Venezuela, are prohibited by different laws from proceeding to the new kingdom of Grenada, without a new permission directly and expressly given by the king.—The same is the case in going from St. Fe to Peru, from Peru to Chili, &c. These arrangements, without being ever rescinded, are, however, fallen into disuse. A more liberal policy has superseded their operation.

The legislator thought it his duty to testify his reverence for religion by denying every person access to Spanish America, who had the misfortune to be impeached before the tribunal of the inquisi-

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sition, whatever might have been the decision pronounced upon his case. Heretics, the children and grand-children of the victims of the *Auto da fe*, or of those who put on the *sanbenito*, were likewise debarred.—

The difficulties which Strangers experience are greater.

The difficulties which the Spaniards themselves experience before they are admitted into their colonies, sufficiently evince those which must be surmounted by foreigners, who wish to obtain a legal introduction. Till now, the first requisite for procuring a passport was to prove a Spanish origin.—The imposibility of giving satisfaction on this point rendered all solicitations, and all proceedings abortive. But time, at length, and the exigencies of the state, more than any change of system, has presented another order of things which seems to open to all the world free access to the Spanish settlements, on condition of paying the tax fixed by government.

A royal order of the 3d August, 1801, entitled Tarif of Graces, says Art. 55: "For the permissions "which are granted to foreigners to pass into the "Indies, the tax shall be fixed by the chamber (of "Indies) according to the importance of the object "and circumstances." The following article taxes the permission of residing in the Indies at 8,200 reals of vellon, which are equal to 400 milled dollars, or 2,100 franks; and Art. 57 fixes at the same sum of 8,200 reals, the tax for the naturalization of those who have the requisite qualifications, of which the principal one is to be a catholic.

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Trials which Foreigners undergo, who settle in the Spanish Colonies.

The great difficulty of getting settled in the Spanish colonies naturally excites, in the breast of a foreigner who is in pursuit of fortune, a desire of making a permanent establishment there. Some have fallen, and daily do fall, on the means of eluding the law, either by cunning address, or by the indulgence of the governors or commanders of the places to which they resort. If they are totally inactive, if they lead a life of indigence, intemperance, or what would most recommend them, of abject beggary, they may remain without molestation, under the humiliating protection of Spanish contempt. If they practise some trade or profession, they are liable to be denounced, persecuted, and treated as enemies, by all the Spaniards of the same trade or profession; they must lend their money to any person who chooses to apply for it; and as soon as their generosity ceases, persecution begins. If they have any acquaintance above the common, they are always suspected; for it is the general opinion of the Spaniards that every well informed foreigner must be an enemy to the laws of the country. No direct inquiry is ever made with respect to religion, unless the impiety of the individual is become notorious; they never have recourse to this measure, except when revenge has no other means of gratification, and then, nothing is more easy than to prove the irreligion of a foreigner who had always before passed for a good christian. Witnesses then swear that he has spoken irreverently of

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the holy mysteries; that he only goes to church in order to be guilty of indecencies; that he has treated the ceremonies of religion with derision, &c. &c. It is however true that the tribunals, divested of the prejudices of ancient times, do not apply the rigor of the law to this sort of delinquency; but people frequently get clear by some years' imprisonment, by paying the expenses of prosecution, or by suffering banishment.

Hardly any Emigration from Spain to Terra Firma.

From the number of Europeans scattered over the Captain-generalship of Caraccas, one would be apt to think that a considerable emigration takes place from Spain. A slight examination will easily prove the contrary. If we except the official characters sent by government, and perhaps even including these, not more than a hundred annually emigrate from the mother country to the Captain-generalship of Caraccas. It is also true, that fewer still return to Europe. The Spaniards being of a grave character, and sedentary habit, are extremely loath to change their situation. Once arrived in America, none of them entertain the smallest desire to visit their household gods. They create for themselves new ones wherever fortune has cast their lot. Nay, they frequently get themselves wives and beget children before they have provided for their own subsistence. They are only the Biscayans and Catalonians, whose love of country is not so easily extinguished.

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Attachment of the Creoles to their Country.

As to the Creoles they scarce remember that Spain is their mother-country. The idea which they have of it, is far from inspiring them with the desire of approaching it From he eagerness with which the Europeans set off for America, the creoles think there exists not a better country than their own; and from the avidity with which the Spaniards arrive from Old Spain, they are confident they inhabit the happiest land upon the globe. They think nothing of the fine climate and productions of Europe, when they behold the extreme wretchedness of those who come from it. Intoxicated with this opinion, they feel a kind of pride in being born on the soil of the New World, and conceive an unalterable attachment for a country but lately adopted by their fathers. It is not, therefore, astonishing that a population unchecked by emigration, by war, or by pestilence, should have progressively increased for near three hundred years, however small it might have been in its origin. It would have been still more considerable, if the churches had been less supplied with ministers, and the cloisters with monks and friars.

Public Education.

Manners are so closely connected with the system of education, that they are commonly but the result of the impressions received at school. Men are almost always what they are made. Thus to know in what manner a nation educate their children is very nearly to know their manners. I do not,

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therefore, depart from the rules of history, when I analyse the education before I develope the morals of the Creoles. Here I congratulate my reader upon being able to assure him that this part of my duty shall be performed without the errors which spring from prejudice or prepossession; for I have only to become the interpreter of D. Miguel Joseph Sanz, a gentleman of the law born at Valencia, in the province of Venezuela. This gentleman, whose excellent natural parts, improved by education, have elevated him above that thick mist of prejudice with which he is surrounded, has been charged by the government with the task of framing a code of municipal laws for the city of Caraccas, and from what I have seen of his performance during my stay there, I can with confidence affirm that he fully justifies the honour conferred on him by the choice. To me he appeared happily to unite extensive views and wise measures, with vigorous and correct principles.

"No sooner," observed this new Lycurgus of Venezuela, in his discourse on public education, "No sooner does the child discover the first feeble efforts of intellect, than he is sent to school, where he learns to read books replete with ridiculous and extravagant tales, frightful miracles, and a superstitious devotion reduced to certain external forms, by which he is disciplined to hypocrisy and imposture.—Far from instructing him in those primary duties, from which all others are derived, by impressing his tender heart with a deep sense of the greatness, the power, the goodness, and the justice of the supreme being, the creator of all things, so as to in-

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spire him with truly christian maxims, his father is contented and thinks he has discharged his duty, provided the child knows certain forms of prayer by rote, recites the rosary, wears a scapulary, and performs certain other external acts of the christian ritual, which, allowing them to be in themselves good, pious and devout, are, however, by no means sufficient to make him a good christian, or a virtuous man. Instead of teaching their children what they owe to God, to themselves, and to their neighbours, they suffer them to engage in every kind of dangerous amusement, without paying the smallest attention to the society which they frequent. Instead of precepts of morality, they inculcate certain points of pride and vanity which lead them to abuse the privileges of their birth, because they do not know the objects for which they were conferred. There are few of the youth of Caraccas who do not pretend to a pre-eminence in rank, and foolishly pride themselves in having a grandfather an alferex, an uncle an alcaide, a brother a monk, or a relation a priest.

"These failings, which arise entirely from education, breed animosities among families, and make the citizens deceitful and irrational. There can be no sincerity, peace, attachment nor confidence in a country, where every one makes it the object of his particular study to be distinguished above others by his birth and vanity; where, instead of inspiring children with a just emulation of the virtues of their distinguished countrymen, and with a horror of the vices and crimes of the wicked, they are taught, or, at least, hear nothing from the mouths of

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their parents, but, whether Peter be not as noble as Anthony; that the family of John has such, or such a blemish; that when a marriage took place in this family, that of Diego went into mourning. Such puerile conversations banish every manly sentiment from the heart, powerfully influence manners, create divisions between families, keep up a spirit of distrust, and break the bonds of charity, which are the very foundation, and object of society.

"The system of education," continues Dr. Sanz, "is generally bad at Caraccas. Before a child is yet able to pronounce his alphabet with propriety, to read what he is yet two young to understand, or scribble a little with his pen, they put into his hands the grammar of Nebrija, without considering that, unable to speak his native language, to read, write or calculate, it is ridiculous to put him to the Latin language, or to make him apply to the study of the sciences which are taught at the university: for the child is exposed in society to many mortifications and even to contempt, notwithstanding the gratification his vanity may receive from those showy literary badges which announce him a doctor. Is it not really pitiful to see a student, after becoming pale and emaciated by several years attendance at the higher seminaries, incapable of expressing himself with precision in his native language, of writing a letter, or even marking the accents with tolerable correctness?"

"This is a palpable evil, and requires no proof.—Nay, what is still more surprizing, these scholars ob-

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stinately contend, that to acquire a grammatical knowledge of their mother tongue and to read and write it correctly, is but a wanton sacrifice of time.

"This precipitation in their studies arises from a natural ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, and a want of method to direct it. Boys, who have prematurely commenced the study of the Latin language and the liberal sciences, before they are taught their native tongue or the common rules of arithmetic, return with reluctance after they grow up, to those studies which they neglected in their youth. They fancy the whole circle of the sciences are contained in the Latin grammar of Nebrija, the philosophy of Aristotle, the institutes of Justinian, the Curia Philippica, and theological writings of Gonet and Larraga. If they can make extracts from these works, say mass, display the doctor's badge, or appear in the dress of a priest or monk, they are then sufficiently accomplished for any line or profession. Decency, however, in their opinion, debars them from agricultural pursuits, and enjoins them to treat the mechanical arts with sovereign contempt. If they wear the military dress, it is merely out of ostentation; if they make bad translations from the French, they corrupt the Spanish language. Some take up the profession of the law, merely to gain a livelihood; others enter into holy orders to acquire importance; and some there are who take the vow of poverty for the express purpose of being secured against it. There is scarcely a person of any distinction, but pretends to be a military officer, without having paid any attention to those qualifica-

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tions which are indispensable for the profession of arms. There is not one, whether originally white, or become so by generation, who is not ambitious of becoming a lawyer, a priest or a monk. Those whose pretensions are not so great, wish at least to be notaries, scriveners, or clerks, or to be attached to some religious community, as lay-brothers, pupils, or foundlings. Thus the fields are deserted, whilst their fertility reproaches our inactivity. The laborious husbandman is an object of contempt. Every one wishes to be a gentleman, to lead an idle life, addicted to the frightful vices of luxury, gaming, chicane and calumny. It is thus that law suits are multiplied, the wicked thrive, the good are discouraged, and every thing goes to wreck.

"It is the want of a cultivated understanding which makes people persevere in errors so prejudicial to their felicity. If they knew that no work is more agreeable to God than what tends to the preservation of his worship, their own good, and that of their neighbours, the prebends, which are founded for saying mass, the endowments made for celebrating the festivals of saints with drums and bonfires, the pious contributions made for ridiculous processions and noisy revelry, the expences incurred in blazoning their armorial ensigns for escorts and funeral pomp, and other liberal distributions, which, notwithstanding they are of a religious nature, and spring from the best intentions, yet are by no means indispensable—I say the amount of all those expenditures would be appropriated to the use of schools, to the liberal support of good teachers capable of in-

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spiring youth betimes with religious and political maxims. From such a course of education might be expected wise magistrates, enlightened citizens, who, not abusing authority in order to flatter their passions, nor religion in order to conceal their ignorance under the veil of hypocrisy and superstition, nor power, nor riches in order to oppress the poor, would become the ornament of society, and the active promoters of public prosperity. We see convents and fraternities with immense endowments, and very rich images; priests with prebends invested with 10, 20, 30 and 40 thousand dollars. Who without indignation can behold in this province all property without exception subject to ecclesiastic and monastic rents, whilst not the smallest provision is made for the payment of the teachers who publicly instruct the rising generation in the principles of the religion which they profess, and in the duties which are incumbent on them as men, and as subjects?

"The misfortune which arises from giving youth an education which disposes them to enter into holy orders is equally to be lamented. The parents of those children who do not become priests, monks or friars, though they have not previously examined whether nature has designed them for either of these vocations, feel themselves miserably mortified at the disappointment. Without any other reason or motive but that they have been bred in some convent, or have in some capacity or other served in a church, they get themselves ordained, or take the vows, merely to gratify their parents, or because they can-

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not resist the taste which, from the habits of education, they have contracted for that kind of life. Thus the number of privileged persons is multiplied, and the rest of the citizens are overcharged with prebends, fees and rents, which are founded for the subsistence of ecclesiastics, besides other duties and contributions, from which their profesion is exempted."

This representation, solely designed for the city of Caraccas, is equally descriptive of the other parts of the country, which come within the notice of my work. It exhibits all the characters of truth. The hand, however, that directed the pencil, has given too dark a colouring to the features. It is true, that the Spanish Creoles do not receive such an education as would be necessary to make them statesmen, but neither is it so defective as to make ignorance their distinguishing character. The motive which prompted this declamation will require no other explanation than the information, that the person who speaks, is a friend to the prosperity of his country; a man who wishes that the light of reason, with which he himself is so eminently favoured, should dissipate the darkness in which his countrymen are unhappily involved; a father of a family, who thinks that the most precious inheritance which can be transmitted from one generation to another, is the practice of virtue, which implies a hearty and sincere homage from the creature to the Creator, a respect for the depositaries of the public authorities, obedience to the laws, and the love of industry. In order to substitute wholesome for vicious opinions, useful for bane-

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ful customs, he has painted abuses and prejudices under the most hideous forms, that a strong persuasion of the enormity of the evil might the more readily dispose to adopt a remedy.

Aptitude of the Creoles for the Sciences.

The truth is that the Creoles of Terra Firma possess a quick, penetrating mind, and are more capable of application, than the Creoles of our colonies. They are inferior to them in elegant accomplishments, agreeable manners and genteel deportment, because the military exercises, horsemanship, dancing, music and drawing, constitute no part of their education. But from their successful application in the schools, and the facility with which they acquire a perfect knowledge of the civil law, one may judge, that nothing is wanting for the improvement of their disposition, but a direction towards objects, the knowledge of which tends to open the understanding, form the judgment, and adorn the mind. Till the present period, the education of the Spanish Creoles partook of those national prejudices, which inspired contempt for every thing that did not originate amongst themselves. They were fully persuaded, that there existed on just sentiments, no solid principles, nor sound morality, but amongst the Spaniards, and consequently that they would incur a loss by a mixture of their own productions, with those of foreign nations. But a happy revolution of opinion is now on the eve of being accomplished, and every thing announces that the succeeding generation will exhibit to the astonished world the spectacle of a moral

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amelioration, atchieved by the increased energy of the national wisdom in consequence of the admission of whatever is useful in the principles of other nations. Indeed, all the Spanish youth, fully sensible of the insufficiency of their education, apply with avidity to the reading of foreign books, to supply the deficiency of domestic instruction. Among these very few are to be seen, who do not, with the aid alone of a dictionary, make shift to translate French and English, and use every exertion to speak them both, but particularly the former. They do not, like their fathers, think that geography is an useless science, and that the history of mankind does not, by giving a view of the past, throw some light upon the future. It is at present agreed that commerce contains a theory more worthy of being attended to, than it has yet been among the Spaniards. They begin to be less ashamed of studying its regulations, and even of pursuing it as an occupation. Their extravagant passion for distinction is the only prejudice which seems to maintain its ground; but that in its turn will naturally yield to the progress of reason.

This revolution, which is daily advancing among the Spaniards, discovers itself even in the articles of dress and external show, in which their partiality appears decidedly in favour of the French fashions.—The sword, that dear companion of every Spaniard, from his earliest infancy to the day of his death, is no more seen dangling by his side, but on occasions of the greatest public ceremony. He continues every day to lose his conceit for it, and the period is not far distant when it will be as rare to see a sword in the

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streets of Madrid, as to see a three tailed wig in those of Paris. Slouched hats, cropped and unpowdered heads, pantaloons up to the breasts, short vests, buttoned half way, is the stile in which the young Spaniards appear, who, by their opulence and rank, are entitled to preside in the circles of fashion. Their highest ambition is to assimilate their manners to those of the French. A compliment more flattering cannot be paid to a young gentleman, than to tell him he looks like a Frenchman; it is as much as to say he is a man of taste, courage and information.

The Custom of the Afternoon-Nap.

No custom seems to have taken a deeper root in the Spanish manners than that of the nap, which they take after dinner. There is not a single individual in the Spanish settlements, who is not in the habit of appropriating two, three, or sometimes four hours of his time every day to sleep, be his repast heavy or light. To deprive him of this indulgence would prove as painful to him as to be deprived of his nightly repose. Those who are most engaged in the throng and bustle of business, take care to make such arrangements of their time, as not to interfere with that of the nap; and, as if this singular habit arose not less from the nature of the climate than that of the inhabitants, strangers seldom pass a year there without contracting it.

Marriages.

As by taking a view of the system of education established in a country, we are enabled to acquire correct notions of the manners of its inhabitants,

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so by inquiring into the principles upon which marriage is fixed, we shall be furnished with a key for the disclosure of their morals, so as to be able to discern their real complexion, and not that specious artificial form under which they are externally so marked and disguised by the selfish passions and sinister motives of men, as easily to impose upon the superficial observer. To the examination, therefore, which we have just concluded, will naturally succeed that which we are going to undertake.

Religion, public opinion, and that spirit of gallantry which distinguishes the nation, all conspire to establish amongst the Spaniards a partiality for matrimony, which is not otherwise without its particular prerogatives. The smallest indication, for instance, of irregular conduct, is admitted as a proof against a batchelor; whereas, the most indisputable proofs against a married man, are generally rejected, unless his lawful wife prefers the complaint.

The Spaniards marry very young.

In the Spanish territories, as well as in all other countries, which are furnished with a written code of laws, the girls are allowed to be arrived at the period which is commonly called the age of puberty at twelve, and boys at fourteen years: this is also about the time the Spaniards think of marrying. A young man, not destined for the church, who is not married at 20, begins to be thought dilatory. Nothing is more common than to see a young couple, both whose ages when added do not exced 30. As soon as nature gives the hint, they seek to gratify her desire

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in the chaste bands of matrimony. Marriage they think is the seal of manhood. The study of characters seldom precedes the conjugal tie. An union for life is formed with as little premeditation as if it were that of a day. The sympathy of caprice is mistaken for that of passion, a momentary liking for a permanent attachment. This, in a great measure, is to be ascribed to the Spanish laws, which, in this important transaction of human life, upon which depend the happiness or misery of both parties concerned for the remainder of their days, give too little controul to parents over the inclinations of their children.

In all civilized nations, parents possess an absolute authority over their children till the period fixed by law. The Batavian Republic has extended this period to twenty years for females, and to twenty-five for males; England has restricted it to twenty-one for both sexes. In France the expiration of minority was fixed at twenty-five for females and thirty for males.* As long as children are minors, they remain in entire dependence on their parents. During this time they are allowed to have no will of their own; every engagement which they contract is null, every promise is nugatory. The intention of the legislator, by this wise measure was, to subject the morals of youth to a salutary controul; to put them under the protection of enlightened guardians, capa-

* The law of the 26th Ventose, year 11, respecting marriage, dates the majority of males at twenty-one, and that of females at twenty-five; but both have the management and free disposal of their estates at the age of twenty-one, according to the law of the 8th Germinal, year 11.

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ble of discovering the snares that might be laid for their inexperienced age. No one is more entitled or better qualified for the discharge of these delicate and very important duties, than those to whom nature seems to have confidentially assigned them, upon the security of such ties as render the happiness of the pupil as dear to them as their own.

The Authority of Parents over Children is less than in other States.

The Spanish laws, if I may judge of them according to several instances which have fallen under my observation, are singular in supposing that parents are indifferent with respect to the prosperity of their children. With an absurdity not easy to be conceived, the legislator proceeds upon the presumption that their reasoning faculties attain to perfect maturity at the age of puberty. We easily perceive, both from the letter and spirit of their laws, that children are not of age till twenty-one, and that till that period the consent of the parents is indispensable to enable them to enter into legal marriage. But a misapplied jurisprudence renders that disposition abortive: for a little girl at the age of twelve, or stripling boy at fourteen, who talks of entering into the sacred bands of marriage, asks the consent of his parents as a mere matter of form. If it does not appear to be a suitable match, if the conduct, the morals, the education of the beloved object do not promise a happy union, the parents, as no doubt is their duty, withhold their consent. But their refusal, instead of arresting all further proceedings in

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the business, as it would in any other country, only furnishes amongst the Spaniards an occasion to the refractory child to institute a scandalous lawsuit against those who gave him birth. Justice, instead of defending the parental authority, gives a favourable reception to the complaints of a child in his first departure from filial duty to the pursuit of a licentious conduct. Upon the first application, they grant the female petitioner what she asks, to be removed from her father's house to another lodging. The parents, in consequence of this, are condemned to furnish money to pay her board as well as to defray the expenses of the suit, and all that they are allowed to advance in their own defence is the inferiority of the proposed son or daughter-in-law in point of rank. That is the only point which will be admitted as satisfactory and conclusive on the part of the court. It is natural, therefore, always to insist upon that point, and it as naturally follows that all that is said and written upon a question, so deeply interesting to a people who know no advantages superior to those of birth, should excite general sensibility and party passions, and give rise to vexatious suits which perpetuate animosity amongst families. But should equality of rank be incontestably established, irregularity of life, disparity of age and difference of fortune are no bar to the courts authorising a celebration of marriage.

The disobedient child has another mode more simple, but more rarely put in practice, of defying the parental authority, and gratifying her own taste. It

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is sufficient to constitute a valid marriage, that the bride and bridegroom publicly declare to their parish curate, that they take one another for man and wife.

The want of publication of banns and consent of parents is no obstacle to the administration of the ceremony. Children, who have not obtained the consent of their parents, or choose to save themselves the trouble of applying in order to avoid the mortification of a premeditated refusal, present themselves to the curate in the street, in private houses, or wherever they can have a chance of meeting him, and on the spot pass through a formality, which, however ludicrous may be the manner of conducting it, is sufficiently effectual to unite them for life in bands which would be the cause of less sorrow and repentance if they were not indissoluble.

Happy Reform.

It is true, that the civil laws, in this instance at variance with the canonical laws, prohibit these kind of marriages, but the penalties imposed on the delinquents are always eluded, because the families which ought to insist upon their infliction, when the affair is over, and cannot be helped, have no other part to act but to pardon; so that the child who joins effrontery to disobedience, may boast that every thing, even the laws, are favourable to his irregularities. In England every minister who marries minors without a certificate of the parents' consent, is subject to a fine of one hundred pounds sterling. The

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French laws, besides disinheriting the refractory child, declared the clergyman who prostituted his ministry to a clandestine marriage, guilty of a rape, and ordered him to be prosecuted for it. This violent regulation produced an effect, which left no occasion to have recourse to it.*

* As I finished writing this article, lamenting the inadequacy and viciousness of the Spanish law upon that important subject, chance, as it were yielding to the vows which I was forming for the repression of abuses, threw into my hands a proof that they no longer existed. By a pragmatic sanction, of the 28th of April, 1803, issued in order to give the decree of the 10th of the same month the force and effect of a constitutional law, his Catholic Majesty has declared, that males under twenty-five years of age, and females under twenty-three, cannot contract marriage without the express consent of their father; who shall not be bound to give the reasons of his refusal. In case of the death or absence of the father, the mother is to exercise the same right; but, in this case, the children may marry one year before their respective majority; and in failure of the father, and mother, the grand-fathers, on the father and mother's side, must be asked for their consent till the age of twenty-three by the males, and the age of twenty-one by the females.

Military-men, who must have the permission of the king to marry, must not demand it till they have previously obtained it of their fathers. Yet, if it is refused, they can always solicit that of the king, who will grant or refuse it according to circumstances.

The curates and vicars, who shall celebrate marriages without the observance of these forms, shall be banished, and their estates confiscated. The contracting parties shall incur the same penalty.

In no court, secular or ecclesiastic, shall demands be admitted with respect to marriages not contracted in the manner here prescribed; and in that case they shall proceed not as for criminal or mixed affairs, but as for affairs purely civil.

Even the king's children cannot contract marriage without the consent of their father, or of the king his successor. They can never acquire the liberty of marrying without this consent.

Here we see the light of reason gradually dissipate the darkness of prejudice. This cedule was published at Caracccas, the 3d of February, 1804.

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Causes of unhappy Marriages.

To marriages contracted at too early a period are to be ascribed those domestic disturbances which so frequently appear in Spanish families. To the ardour and impetuosity of passion which impelled the young couple to contract the engagement, succeeds the calm of reason and reflection, which unfortunately condemns the transaction. The contrariety of their characters soon embroils the matrimonial peace, and nothing but a regard to honour, public opinion and religion prevents them from dissolving a tie that makes them so completely miserable. They preserve appearances, but cordially hate one another.—Fidelity becomes a burden, which neither of them cares to support. The children, to whose eyes the irregularity of the father, and the intrigues of the mother are glaringly exposed, are, in their tender age, trained up in the school of vice, the baneful effects of which are thus transmitted to distant posterity. Had Montesquieu been acquainted with the state of domestic society amongst the Spaniards in America, or had his writings been expressly addressed to them, he certainly would not have hazarded the opinion, that the more marriage prevailed, the less the vice of infidelity would appear amongst them. The inconsiderate protection which the Spanish police extends to wives, to the prejudice of their husbands, is another source of evil in their domestic intercourse. No mortal is more unhappy than a Spaniard, whose wife is of a jealous, unruly, or peevish disposition. If she is tormented with jealousy, she

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easily finds access to the provisor, the curate, or any of the magistrates, who are all disposed implicitly to believe whatever tale of reproach her malicious ingenuity will be pleased to fabricate against the husband. The most usual subject of complaint is, that the gallant husband keeps a mistress, or at least squanders away his money in debauchery, keeps his family in penury, makes his wife unhappy, offers violence to her person, &c. &c. Of all this she is not required to give any proof. She is credited upon her bare word. According to the rank her husband sustains in society, he is either summoned to receive a sharp reprimand, or he is immediately clapped in prison, and there he remains until his wife condescends to ask his release. If the husband complains of the misdemeanour of his wife, she has only to pretend to be highly offended at a charge which amounts to an attack upon her honour, and the poor husband is condemned to silence to teach him more discretion; nay, he may think he has made a lucky escape, if he does not undergo the punishment that was merited by his wife.

The Spaniard, if he is married, must not undertake a journey without the express consent of his wife, and without providing for her subsistence during his absence. If he does not return precisely on the day appointed at his departure, the magistrates, on the first application of the wife, order the husband to return to his forlorn spouse. Were he in Chili or in California, home he must go, whether his business be finished or unfinished: his wife has spoken the word, and he must comply. Every mi-

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litary man, every officer of administration or justice, if a married man, leaves to his wife, who does not, follow him, a proportion of his pay never less than one third; if he does not do it with a good grace, the treasurer will be obliging enough to make a retention of the sum.

There are, however, a great many Spanish families, and I may even say the majority of them, whose heads enjoy peace and happiness, setting, in their conduct, an example of virtue to their children.

Apparent Submission of the Children to their Parents.

This people are so much accustomed to give an air of frankness and candour to all their transactions, that, to judge from appearances, one would pronounce, that there was no country in the world where filial respect is better established. Every morning before they rise from their bed, and every evening before they lie down, the children of the Spaniards, whether rich or poor, whether white or black, whether free or slaves, crave and receive upon their knees the benediction of father and of mother, and kiss, before they stand up, the hand that dispenses it.

The same ceremony is repeated during the day, every time that the father, the mother, the uncle, the aunt, or the children return from abroad and enter the house. They use, likewise with their parents, a manner of speaking expressive of the greatest humility and dependence. They honour them with *sumercod*, which is not customary, in society, but from slaves to their masters, or from freedmen to

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whites of distinction. But all these homages are, in general, merely external. They flow less from sentiment, than custom, which has ranked them with the etiquettes or ceremonies, an article of manners sufficiently numerous and curious amongst the Spaniards to demand our particular notice.

Etiquettes or Ceremonies.

It is a long time since we considered the troublesome laws of etiquette as objects of ridicule, although the Spaniards still entertain as much respect for them, as we did a century ago. Whoever violates them passes amongst them for an ill-bred, unmannerly mortal, *por hombre sin trato.* Their laws, however, are so amazingly numerous, that without meaning any harm, one may happen to miss some of them—. Woe to him whose memory is so treacherous; for he has no mercy to expect upon that article.

All Spaniards, and in imitation of them, all who express themselves in the Spanish language, make use of the third person of the verb instead of the second; the *you* is only used in the second person plural and in sermons and public discourses. In conversation they salute with *your grace, vuestra merced,* which, by contraction, is pronounced *usted.*

The canons, the provisor, the members of the audience, and treasurer, have, in conversation and writing, the title of your lordship *vuestra sennoria,* which is pronounced *eusia.* The bishop has the title of *sennoria ilustrisima.*

With sennor they honour every person indiscrimi-

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nately, except in public acts, in which that distinction is reserved for those who have the title of lordship. The *don* nearly corresponds with our *de*, with this difference, that the Spaniards, till a very late period, have prostituted it much less than we have done. At present it is given to every white who makes a tolerably decent appearance.

The stranger who arrives, as well as the person who returns home after a long absence, must wait for the compliment of a visit. In their turn they visit only those who did them the honour of calling upon them, excepting their superiors, who likewise frequently make the first advance. This duty is performed either personally or by writing, or even by a simple message. Not to be apprized of the arrival of a stranger, or the return of the absent, is a crime of high-treason against the laws of etiquette, which establishes between the person who should pay and the person who should receive the visit, a coldness that borders upon enmity. The impression made by such an oversight is hardly to be effaced by the most punctilious reparation.

The rules of civility are violated, when a person changes his place of residence without giving intimation of it to all the neighbours of the house he leaves, as well as to those amongst whom he is going. This notice is commonly given by a circular card, in which they express to the former the regret which they feel in removing from a place, whose neighbourhood has always been so agreeable to them, informing them at the same time, that they transfer their residence to such a house, and will be always ready to execute the

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orders of the person to whom the attention is paid; to the latter they speak of the pleasure they anticipate from fixing their abode amongst such honourable neighbours, and beg to be permitted to make a tender of their services. A satisfactory answer or personal visit is punctually expected from every neighbour, in failure of which the families live on the footing not only of strangers, but of enemies. When a marriage takes place, the parties concerned advise all their friends and acquaintances of the connection which they have just formed. This communication is made either by the joint visit of the bridegroom and his father-in-law, or by cards, in which the young couple testify their warmest attachment to the interest of the person addressed. The same formality is observed on the birth of a child. As soon as the child is ushered into the world, the father informs all his neighbours, that his spouse has blessed him with an accession to his family, and that the young guest is another added to the number of those servants who are always ready to receive the commands of the person who is thus informed of the event. All these intimations are repaid with visits, otherwise a very serious misunderstanding will unavoidably be the consequence.

It is deemed a trespass against the rules of decency to neglect visiting any acquaintance who is confined to the house on account of indisposition, whether dangerous or slight. The convalescent, in return, thinks it a sacred duty to devote his first visits abroad to the person who has honoured him with

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these marks of attention. All Spaniards of either sex, who rank above the common, on the festival of their tutelar saint, receive visits from all their friends and acquaintances, but particularly from those who are dependant upon them, or who have an interest in conciliating their favour. There is such a continual resort to their houses on such occasions, as exactly resembles our ancient visits on New-Year's Day. As the host is not always visible, and as it is necessary to know those who discharge this duty, they place in the corridor, or parlour, a table covered with tapestry, upon which they leave an ink-stand, and pen and paper. Every visitant is obliged to write his name upon the list, which becomes a proof of the attention and esteem of those whose names are enrolled.—These visits are most convenient, as they do not require to be returned till the days of the like festivals of the respective visitants. The neglecting, or forgetting of an obscure saint, whose name is perhaps not to be found in the calender, excites animosities not easy to be pacified. Good-breeding among the Spaniards requires, that the visitant, before going into the house, make some noise at the door, in order to give notice to the family of his arrival, and that he should not advance a step farther, till he receives permission from within. The silence of the person who would go in without any ceremony would be liable to a very unfavourable construction. He would be suspected of the rude intention of coming on the family by surprise, or overhearing their conversation, before his arrival was discovered.

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The ladies never get up to receive any visits whatever. If they are in their apartments when a visit is announced, they do not permit the door of the chamber, where the visitant is to be introduced, to be opened, till they are seated in their sofas, and think themselves in the attitude proper for receiving company. This custom is rigidly adhered to without respect to rank, sex, or intimacy.

The ladies never visit one another without giving previous notice. They send early in the morning, a recado or message, to ask permission to pay their visit. These visits always take place in the afternoon, from five o'clock till night, or from the time the bell rings for the Angelus or evening prayer, till eight o'clock. The gentlemen rarely accompany the ladies upon these occasions. They go without any escort, attended only by two or three servant girls, dressed in black petticoats and white mantles. According to the law of etiquette, one must appear altogether munificent to the person with whom he converses. If you tell a Spaniard that he has a fine watch, a fine diamond, a fine cane, a fine sword, a fine coat, he always replies, "Yes, sir, at your service;" making a movement, by way of grimace, as if he would give it you. In the same way he acts when his house, his children, or his lady is the subject of conversation; "all "these," says the Spaniard, in the same canting phraseology, "all these are yours, sir, who admire them."

The costume of etiquette, for visits as well as festivals, is a taffeta, satin, or cut velvet coat and breeches. Cloth is never used unless the person is in mourning; and then to make it appear more sumptuous, it is

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adorned with rich embroidery. The waistcoat must be of gold tissue, or at least of silk covered with embroidery—the hat cocked. All this fine attire would still signify nothing, if it was not accompanied with a silver, or in case the person is rich, a gold-hilted sword.

Several proceedings of government are likewise regulated by etiquette, or rather, are in their nature, but a mere ceremonial. Amongst these are the king, queen, and prince of Asturia's birth-days, and the festivals of the king's tutelar saint. These sorts of ceremony they call *dias de besamenos*, (days of kissing hands.) They are, like all the other Spanish festivals, purely religious. All the military officers, and members of the audience, repair to the governor and captain-general's houses. From the government-house they go to church. The captain-general, as president of the audience, heads the procession along with the regent and oidors. The military follow. They join in a solemn Mass and *Te Deum*, during which a detachment of regular troops make three discharges. They return in the same order to the government house. Immediately after, all the civil and religious bodies go to compliment the captain-general, as the representative of the king. There occurred some difficulty in ascertaining whether the bishop was bound to pay that visit. The king decided in the affirmative; but to mollify the asperity of that proceeding, the same order requires, that the moment the prelate shall have discharged this duty, the captain-general, with all his retinue, shall go and visit the bishop as prince of the church, and this is performed

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with the greater punctuality, as the Spaniards are not to be trifled with on the subject of etiquette.

It is a very natural reflection, that in a country where compliments flow in full tide, frankness should be at a very low ebb; for men who have composed for themselves a code of laws for the regulation of all intercourse public and private; who see one another, not out of friendship but formality, are far from discovering a spirit of harmony, union and benevolence. Every one lives in a distant unsocial manner, and when they do make any approaches, they are chiefly actuated by motives of policy, not by those of cordial attachment. In a community where the whole intercourse of life is conducted upon principles of formality and mere outward show, none of those advantages can be enjoyed which are attached to the social and civilized state. To this defect in the manners of the Spaniards may perhaps be attributed that propensity which they discover to lodge criminal informations against one another; those which respect smuggling, are the only ones reprobated by public opinion. All others are regarded as indifferent and sometimes meritorious. Among the Spaniards in America, you never see, as in Europe, a company of young ladies decently assemble in order to amuse themselves with innocent diversions, by which means an opportunity is afforded of contracting friendships and acquaintance at an early period, which frequently last for the remainder of their lives; not even the young men are observed to associate in parties of pleasure. No juvenile balls are given at the expense of the young gentry; no social entertainments known,

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where every member of the cheerful club is at once landlord and guest; where frolicksome gaiety creates a kind of sympathy, which time can never impair, nor the reverses of life extinguish.

Their bad Effects.

The want of free communication and friendly attachment gives rise to a secret and dissembled jealousy which is provoked by the prosperity of another, but which policy takes care to conceal under appearances calculated to impose. Hence the reason may naturally be assigned why the Spaniards are in reality so susceptible of the malignant passions, yet in appearance are so placid and composed. An indirect or unguarded speech, an equivocal expression with regard to the antiquity of his family, his nobilty, or the nature of titles, throws the Spaniard into a transport of rage, and kindles in his bosom the desire of revenge. He bears merriment more patiently at his own expense than at that of his ancestors. As soon as he finds himself grossly offended on those very delicate points, he has recourse to law. The duel, condemned by sound reason, and proscribed by the laws of all governments, yet every where supported by public opinion, except in the Spanish dominions, where it perfectly corresponds with the rigor of the laws; the duel is never employed among the Spaniards to atone for injuries. When a rupture has once taken place they are never disposed to any sincere reconciliation, nor generously to consign the offence to oblivion. As soon as a Spaniard has vowed hatred against any one, it is for life, and according to the importance of the

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cause which has excited his resentment, it is transmitted with more or less violence to succeeding generations. But although this vindictive disposition does not impel them to any sanguinary measures, it keeps them perpetually engaged in vexatious law suits, by which they become a prey to the harpies of a profession, which, with all the subtilty of chicane, make it their object to multiply litigious pleadings, perplex the simplest causes, and protract the decisions of justice, in order to involve their clients in greater expenses. There are very few Spanish families of any note who are not engaged in several law suits, which entirely turn upon points of personal pride.

The Spaniards are litigious.

The Spaniards, of America, teaze the courts of justice by the frequency of their applications, as much on account of their interest, as their prerogatives. They seem to be continually upon the watch to seize an opportunity of engaging in a law suit. They are passionately fond of judicial investigations, and this passion, which ruins themselves, furnishes abundant subsistence to a prodigious number of rapacious scribes, whose reputation is advanced in proportion to the talent they have acquired of starting incidental obstacles, that is to say, of ingrafting process upon process in endless succession. This I affirm with the frankness and impartiality which dictate my thoughts, and guide my pen; there is not a country in the world which abounds so much in law suits, as Spanish America. Above all the rest, the soil of the island of Cuba is pre-eminent for this species of pro-

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duction. One would hardly think it credible, that in the city of Havanna alone, where there was no court of appeal, there were computed to be, in 1792, seventy-two advocates, independently of those who were scattered over the other cities and villages, amounting to thirty-four, and making, with the seventy two of the Havanna, a total of one hundred and six advocates. The entire population did not exceed, at that same period, two hundred and fifty-four thousand eight hundred and twenty-one souls, reckoning freemen and slaves, and the territorial exports did not amount to the value of 5,000,000 milled dollars, whilst St. Domingo, with a population of six hundred and sixty thousand souls, and produce to the value of 27,000,000 milled dollars, had, in the two councils, and over the whole colony, but thirty six advocates. From this litigious spirit of the Spaniards arises that swarm of vermin that surround the tribunals in order to devour the substance of families, which the restlessness and personal pride of the possessors expose to all the arts of chicane.—To the facility with which a livelihood is gained in this manner in the practice of the law, which requires no other talent than that of sophistry, is to be ascribed the avidity with which so many enter into that profession, and the aversion which is generally discovered for agricultural labour. From the enormous sums which the cultivator spends in litigation, necessarily result the declining and ruinous condition of the plantations. Many persons, whose characters inspire confidence, estimate the expenses of every kind which are annually made within the jurisdiction of the au-

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dience of Caraccas, at 1,500,000 milled dollars. I have seen none who stated them at less than 1,200,000. If a happy reform could reduce both that expense and the number of those who depend upon it to one third of what they are at present, agriculture, commerce and morals, would be greatly benefited by the change.

The Spaniards are extremely prudent in their Undertakings.

It is a pretty striking inconsistency in the character of the Creole and European Spaniards, established in America, that by their ordinary behaviour in society they do not appear to verify what their passion for litigation would seem to announce. Instead of being petulant, hasty, and passionate, they are mild, kind, affable and excessively polite. They are not remarkable for boldness in their affairs, much less for rashness. All their undertakings are conducted with that kind of timidity which they call prudence. They leave little to chance, or to say the truth, they leave nothing to it. Hence it happens that their successes never excite astonishment, nor their reverses despondency. If they do not amass rapid fortunes, their ruin is neither frequent nor precipitate. It is true, ambition would not be satisfied with such moderate maxims of conduct. They have, however, an air of philosophy, which gives them the appearance of wisdom; at least we cannot deny, that to the citizen, they present the advantage of preserving the tranquillity of his own breast, to the state, assurance of the stability of the government, and to the mother

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country, the certainty of the duration of her sovereignty. In fact, it is not in the natural order of things, that men, habituated to grope in all the transactions of private life, should so far depart from the usual tenor of their conduct, as to lift up their profane hands against a government which they were accustomed from their infancy to regard as sacred. Again, if by an extraordinary event, there should start up one of those rare geniuses which nature produces in political convulsions, who would join enterprise to talents, and ambition to enterprise, his disorganizing efforts would prove abortive from the indifference of the people, from the religious respect which they entertain for the laws and magistrates, and particularly from the interest which binds to the royal authority, all the Spanish colonists, either on account of the offices which they hold or solicit, or the distinctions which they expect to be conferred upon them.

Conspiracy of Venezuela.

Notwithstanding the powerful supports of the Spanish sovereignty in the West-Indies, it was in the year 1787 on the point of experiencing a dangerous concussion in the province of Venezuela. It is true, that a multiplicity of circumstances tended, at that period, to form a conjuncture which is never likely to recur, and combined to give the conspiracy the serious character which it assumed.

Causes.

The principles blazoned on the victorious standard of the French Republic in its early career, too sim-

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ple not to be understood, too natural not to be adopted, were displayed, in order to be admired in the four quarters of the world. The morality of the objects which they contemplated was so noble, so persuasive, that without the aid of experience, which has demonstrated their defects, human wisdom would never have resolved to arrest their progress or prescribe their limits. It is not, then, at all astonishing, that in Terra-Firma they had kindled a flame in the breasts of some characters who, constitutionally ardent, and participating the electrick shock which then pervaded the greater part of the world, seriously conceived the project of reducing them to practice. The opportunity might appear the more favourable as Spain, exhausted by the war which she had lately supported against France, and exhausting herself still more by that in which she was actually engaged against England, found herself too much cramped in her European operations, and too closely beset by the ardour of the navy of her enemy, to think it adviseable, even if it were practicable, to expose her own coasts, daily menaced by the enemy, by withdrawing her forces, and sending them to America, in order to defend her rights from attack and her sovereignty from outrage. It was, on the other hand, probable, that England would protect, in Terra-Firma, insurrection and disorganization, which from a policy not easy to be accounted for, she has, during the last war, every where provoked, where her arms were not rendered subservient to the gratification of her ardent passion for conquest.

Another more immediate cause might afford to

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the factious the hope of being able to engage the city of Caraccas in a revolution. The seeds of it seem to have been planted in 1796, by a measure of police, which was executed in so shocking a manner as to rouse into opposition all the unhappy persons whom it oppressively affected. The government was already assailed by detached crowds of people, and would, in a short time, have been attacked by the whole multitude, had not the captain-general, Carbonel, in opposition to the sentiments of the audience, taken the decisive resolution to redress the grievances of the people, because he thought their complaints were founded on justice. This chief, by the wisdom of his arrangements, had the glory to appease the tumult, quiet the clamours, and dissipate the uneasiness which generally prevailed. All returned to order, but it was possible some animosity might still have remained.

Conspiracy formed by three Prisoners of State.

Such was the disposition of men and things, when three state-prisoners, condemned in Spain for revolutionary crimes, to be shut up for the remainder of their lives in the casemates of Guayra, arrived at the place of their destination. They all had the talent of persuasion, but one of them possessed it in a very eminent degree. They announced themselves as martyrs of liberty, and victims of tyranny; and by frequently repeating their story, succeeded in giving it an air of probability, so as to interest in their fate those who were entrusted with their keeping. They obtained, in their confinement, all the indulgence

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which could be given by the officers and soldiers who surrounded them. They were permitted to come out of their casemates in order to enjoy the benefit of the air, and without any restraint to address an audience well disposed to listen to their communications. The confidence and docility which they observed in the behaviour of their keepers inspired boldness, and foreseeing that their seditious doctrine might at least be the means of liberating them from the punishment to which they were condemned, they formed the resolution of realizing their revolutionary maxims in the province of Venezuela. Their design was at first confined to the knowledge of a small number of persons, whose principles were perfectly adapted to such an enterprise. They artfully sounded those whose opinions were not known, in order to avoid the danger of being denounced, and they admitted proselytes of all colours, classes, occupations and conditions of life, that the insurrection might be general, and solely directed against the mother country.

The state-prisoners, in the beginning, did not doubt of the possibility of success. They had reserved for themselves, as might be expected, the first offices of the new republic. But, when they observed that their enthusiasm was not communicated to the great body of the people, that the number of the conspirators did not increase, that the cold and listless character of the people of Venezuela, was not susceptible of any degree of effervescence, they ceased to indulge hopes of deriving any other advantage from the sedition which they fomented, than to effect

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their escape, and, from that period, to this object alone they directed all their attention. It was not difficult for them to persuade their partizans, that the revolutionary principles, which they were the instruments of disseminating in the province, would accelerate and insure the desired event. This prospect afforded sufficient inducement for adopting such measures for their release as were the more likely to succeed, from their keepers being particularly devoted to their cause, and attached to their persons. All the use which they made of their liberty was to keep themselves concealed, and, in the obscurity of that concealment, to make their last efforts to give to the conspiracy that consistency, which alone could insure a happy result. About two months elapsed, whilst they were making these new attempts; but instead of advancing, there appeared, on the contrary, in the conduct of some of those who were most easily persuaded to embark in the design, a certain lukewarmness which betrayed repentance more than resolution. The prisoners of state, seeing that a complete discovery was now unavoidable, thought only of consulting their own safety. They pretended that it was indispensable that they should go themselves and communicate their project to the English inhabitants of the neighbouring islands, and ask their assistance to carry it into execution. They were permitted according to their desire to take their departure in a clandestine manner, and I suppose I may save myself the trouble of informing the reader, that they never thought proper to re-appear.

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Discovery of the Conspiracy.

At length, on the 15th July, 1797, the secret, which was so miraculously withheld for several months, transpired. All was formally disclosed to the government.

A people less attached to their laws, would have found it very difficult to determine what resolution to take at such a crisis; for if the contagion had made any considerable progress, a recourse to violent measures presented the disagreeable alternative of driving the conspirators into open rebellion, and exciting greater terror and alarm, by giving the signal for explosion; on the other hand, by adopting the more moderate resolution of watching their motions, and waiting for the event, they exposed themselves to another alternative not less disagreeable, of giving to the faction time to prepare themselves for striking a surer and more decisive blow. The former mode was preferred, and produced the desired effect.

Measures of Government.

As the seat of the conspiracy was at Guayra, no time was lost in dispatching orders there to imprison all those against whom information had been lodged; the same proceeding took place at Caraccas. These first arrests produced submission and obedience, instead of resistance. The two principal ringleaders disappeared. One of them was captain in the regular troops but retired from service; the other corregidor of the village of Macuto, near Guayra. Some made their appearance in order to avail themselves of

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the pardon which the audience had the good policy to tender to all those would make an open confession of their crime, and an avowal of their sincere repentance. We are sorry to say that this pardon as extended, was neither so generous nor so absolute as had been promised. The people, as if thrown into a state of stupefaction, respectfully allowed the tribunals of justice to execute their functions, and exercised towards the guilty that share of sympathy, which no mortal endowed with common sensibility ever refuses to the errors and misfortunes of his fellow-creatures.

All the examinations which the criminals underwent; all the depositions of witnesses, proved that the insurrection contemplated the destruction of the existing government, and upon its ruins the erection of a republican form of government, the total abjuration of the Spanish sovereignty, and a proclamation of independence. Their intention was to corrupt the troops, seize the persons of their chiefs, and after accomplishing their object, by every means which energy could dictate, invite the other provinces to imitate their example.

If this dreadful project had not miscarried, the Spanish possessions would have been totally ruined; they would have gradually experienced the same disasters, the same devastation, the same convulsions, by which St. Domingo has been afflicted, whilst the powers of government would be alternately usurped by the faction, which circumstances had rendered predominant. Such an enormity amply deserved that the penalties of the law should be signally inflicted upon those who were stained with its guilt.—

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Heavens! in what circumstances is the law to be armed with terror and vengeance, unless in cases where the disturbers of the public peace threaten to overturn the government upon which depends the safety of all, in order to introduce anarchy, which affords security to none, and for the tribunals of justice substitutes those of blood.

Honourable act of Charles IV.

It is with great satisfaction that I relate a trait of clemency which does honour to the reign of Charles IV. Scarcely was the monarch informed of the event which had taken place at Caraccas, when he dispatched to the audience a secret order to recommend to them to refrain from sanguinary measures, to exercise towards those who were concerned in that affair, all the lenity which their former fidelity deserved, and not to punish as a crime, what might be only the effect of seduction and ignorance. This order threw the audience into perplexity. It obliged them to depart from the system of rigour; consequently, there were fewer victims, but the intention of the king was, that there should be none.

Prosecutions of the Tribunals.

The prosecutions were conducted in so dilatory a manner, and the audience discovered so much backwardness in pronouncing their decisions, that the tardiness of their proceedings were considered as a prelude to amnesty. This opinion gained so much ground, that one of the ringleaders, who had fled from arrest, did not hesitate to abandon the asylum

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which he had sought in the islands then in possession of the enemy, and to return two years after to his family: so fully was he persuaded that he could do it without danger. He was mistaken, and his error cost him his life. On the first intelligence, which the government received of the return of the corregidor of Macuto, they made the necessary arrangements to discover and arrest him. Thus betrayed by his own mistaken confidence, which bordered upon temerity, he was transferred to the jail of Caraccas, where he remained but a few days.

A new captain-general, Don Manuel de Guevara Vasconzelos, had just taken possession of the government general of Caraccas. Either to gratify a malicious pleasure by putting his courage to the test, or from an emotion of compassion towards the unfortunate criminal, several anonymous writings were addressed to this governor. These menaces, which are always the certain sign of impotence, made no impression upon the collected spirit of the captain-general. The day of execution was neither accelerated nor retarded. It took place on the 8th of May, 1799, as did likewise that of five other traitors at Guayra, without any tumult, or even the slightest symptom of disapprobation.

The number of the conspirators accused, or denounced, amounted to seventy-two. Seven received sentence of death; one of this number not appearing to take his trial was out-lawed; the others were executed on the spot.

Thirty-six were condemned to the galleys or to a temporary imprisonment from two to eight years.

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The remaining thirty-two, against whom appeared very slight grounds of accusation were sent off to Spain and placed at the mercy of the king, who absolved them in 1802, on condition that they should no more reside in the province of Venezuela, and with a promise to employ them in Spain in the same rank and offices which they held in America.

If we consider according to their origin the seventy-two persons, who either were, or were not suspected to be concerned in this conspiracy, we reckon amongst them twenty-five Europeans and forty-nine Creoles. If we distinguish them with respect to their colour, we discover thirty-nine blacks and thiry-three men of colour. If we examine them according to their employments, we find them consisting of thirteen of the regular military establishment, among whom were commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and privates; and twenty-eight officers, &c. of militia, six clerks of the fiscal department, twenty-three citizens and mechanics; and, lastly, two clergymen, one of them a curate.

If the criminal object of this conspiracy did not strike us with horror, we would feel disposed to admire the talents, intelligence and secrecy with which its measures were concerted. What would have proved fatal to Spain, was the steps which had been taken to prevent her from finding defenders in any class of the people. The fire had been skilfully applied to all the branches, and had they been more combustible, I repeat it, the whole tree, under whose shade the rights of the mother country and general tranquillity reposed, would have been at once reduced to ashes.

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All you Europeans, and descendants of Europeans who inhabit the New World under the laws and protection of your respective mother countries, imitate, in every case, where the spirit of faction would threaten your repose, imitate the wisdom which the inhabitants of Caraccas have manifested upon this important occasion. Like them shut your ears against the delusive, perfidious morality in which all destroying anarchy is ever enveloped. She makes virtue her theme, and vice her practice; promises a profusion of blessings, and diffuses a multiplicity of evils; in a word, she has the tongue of an angel, and the heart of a tigress. Let those perverse men who betray principles of an innovating or revolutionary tendency be abandoned to the rigour of the law. Revolutions, though at considerable intervals indispensable in great states, are always a calamity to the people who are engaged in them; and that calamity is more or less lasting, more or less terrible, in proportion as those who direct them are more or less wise and enlightened, and according as the people have an interest more or less uniform. But in the colonies the great mass of property is in the hands of a class which is far, very far, from being the most numerous.

The public offices, honours and dignities are, particularly in Spanish America, in the hands of a number of citizens still more circumscribed. Both have to dread the hatred and jealousy of those who possess neither dignity nor riches. The security of property depends solely upon the law; and in all the Spanish possessions, the law and religion are so happily combined, as to lend one another mutual

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assistance, to insure order, harmony and public tranquillity. To overthrow these two fundamental supports, is to break down those precious barriers which government opposes to the passions of men; it is to subject the feeble to the discretion of the strong, the man of wealth to the mercy of the man in desperate circumstances; it is to deliver up the virtuous to the fury of the ambitious, the pacific to the inconsiderate enterprises of the turbulent; or, to continue the amplification, it is to kindle a civil war between the obscure man and the man distinguished by his appointments; between the poor and the rich, the slave and the free; it is to dig a frightful abyss in which the pre-eminence, fortunes and lives of citizens of all classes, of men of all colours, are swallowed up and destroyed. Such an image strikes us with horror and ought to determine every citizen to shed the last drop of his blood in support of those beneficial institutions to which he owes the peace and happiness which he enjoys.

Slaves.

The simple word slave extorts involuntary groans in favour of those unfortunate creatures, whom their lot condemns to have no other will than that of their masters, incessantly to toil without deriving any advantage from the sweat of their brow; to enjoy no rank nor consideraton in society; to find in the laws but a feeble protection for their lives; and to be exposed to every injury, to every bad treatment from their inhuman masters. whose property they are. But this evil, great as it is, is but a necessary consequence unhappily arising from others

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which have preceded it in America. The European powers resolved to invade this vast continent in order to augment their commerce by the commodities peculiar to its climate.—After the greater part of its inhabitants were destroyed, the small remnant who escaped the sword of the conquerors, have obtained, as an indemnification for the blood of their ancestors, the privilege of passing their days in the lap of idleness. It was natural to expect that the land thus deprived of its native cultivators should have its deficiency supplied from that country whose arms inflicted so great a calamity.—But as its population was too scanty to furnish where-with to settle its transmarine possessions, and the temperature of the torrid zone was congenial enough with that of the temperate to admit the practicability of transplanting Europeans to America without risking the lives of the emigrants, (of which the first experiment furnished a convincing proof) the court of Spain fluctuated between the necessity of sanctioning the slavery of the Indians, in order to make them the instruments of culture, and that of renouncing the great riches which was promised by the fertility of the lands of the new world. At this very period came Barthelemy De Las Casas, priest, monk, and finally bishop of Chiapa, to present himself in 1517 to Charles V. in order to plead the cause of the Indians. From the general principles upon which natural liberty is founded, he deduced the strange conclusion that the slavery of the Indians was a crime, that of the Africans a necessity. He demanded with all the

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enthusiasm of a philanthropist the liberty of the former, and with the obduracy of a tyrant the slavery of the latter. By his advice four thousand of these wretches were purchased and thrown into the great islands of St. Domingo, Cuba, Jamaica and Porto-Rico. At this period, and after this manner, was the slavery of the blacks established in America. All the European powers, which successively acquired foreign possessions in this quarter, have pursued the same system, which severe philosophy can never approve, but which rational policy regards as a misfortune attached to the interest of possessing colonies; to the rigour of the climates in which they are situated, and the kind of labour which culture requires; to the encouragement held out in the European domestic markets for colonial productions obtained at the least possible expense, and to the impossibility of cultivating these lands by Europeans.

The Spaniards do not carry on the slave trade.

The Spaniatds have never carried on the slave trade in a direct channel, nor thought of establishing factories upon the coast of Africa. They consider that species of traffic as too repugnant to the principles of the christian religion; but by ingeniously compounding with their consciences, they find it very natural to purchase blacks, when they are carried to them. The government frequently enters into contracts with foreign merchants for the importation of a specific number of blacks into such or such parts of their domains. The last treaty of this kind, which was made for the province of Venezuela, has

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been entirely fulfilled since 1797. The king, to reward the particular services of three of his vassals of Venezuela, granted them, in 1801, the privilege of importing into that province four thousand blacks from the coast of Africa; but that privilege had not yet been acted upon at the end of 1805.

Besides these means of procuring cultivators for Terra Firma, the Spaniards were further permitted to go and purchase some in foreign colonies. They were even encouraged by a reduction of the duties on exports obtained in favour of the articles, which were exported in order to apply the proceeds to the purchase of negroes. But since the total subversion of order which took place in St. Domingo, the principles of which were more or less disseminated over foreign colonies, the Spanish government judged that this source, whence its agricultural population was derived, was too much corrupted to admit of importation without running the risk of contagion. It did not hesitate to renounce the trifling advantages which accrued to culture from this branch of importation, in order to shield its possessions from the very probable misfortune of seeing their safety comitted by the introduction of some African, charged with the foul principles of devastation, to which might be ascribed the deplorable state of the French colonies. Several orders of the king have, therefore, prohibited the landing of any foreign negro or mulatto, whether freeman or slave, in Terra Firma.

In the month of September, 1802, some ships were sent from Martinico to the coast of Terra Firma,

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carrying two hundred and fifty negroes and mulattoes of both sexes. A great number of these were not arrived at the age of twenty years, and almost all the males were tradesmen. All these had been kept under confinement by the English, either by the right of war, or on account of the dangerous opinions which they manifested. On the restitution of Martinico, the prefect charged with taking possession of the island, no less desirous than the English had been of preserving good order, thought, not without reason, that the public safety demanded, that all those who were capable of disturbing it should be dismissed from the island. It was resolved that this shipment should consist of two hundred and fifty individuals, who they imagined, might be admitted into the Spanish possessions with as little danger as difficulty, provided due information were communicated with regard to those amongst them whose characters were most exceptionable; so that the vigilance and precautions of the magistrates, by a timely interposition, might frustrate their wicked intention. This arragement as simple as it was natural, was not admitted; the orders of the king, and the fear of bringing disorder into the country, caused it to be rejected.

A system of such rigid exclusion, is undoubtedly not that which is best calculated to give a spring to agricultural improvements: on the contrary, it is rather calculated to retard them; although, upon the whole, it must be confessed the decision upon this occasion was a wise one. In such circumstances, the prudence which preserves, is preferable

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to the hardihood which resolves to acquire at the risk of losing all.

Number of slaves.

We have seen that the number of slaves employed in the captain-generalship of Caraccas, as well for culture as for domestic service, amount to two hundred and eighteen thousand four hundred blacks. We have now only to examine the manner in which they are managed.

Their treatment.

It is generally thought that the Spaniards treat their slaves with more humanity than other nations. This opinion, correct in some respects, is in many others erroneous. Every country has subjected the slaves of its colonies to particular regulations adapted to its own manners and genius. The English treat them with a rigour, which forms a singular contrast with the principles which they profess. They never speak to them but in the tone of passion and severity. The French, without exchanging many words with them, insist on the performance of their tasks at the stated hours, but ask no account of the intervals appropriated to rest. Theft, drunkenness, and laziness, are the only vices which they punish. Except these three offences, all the actions of a slave are referred to the tribulnal of his own conscience; magnificent hospitals attended by skillful physicians attest the care which is taken of the sick.

The distribution of labour in proportion to the strength of each individual; the custom of having a provision-store upon every plantation, which is

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opened whenever the inclemency of the weather prevents the earth from producing a sufficient supply; the clothing regularly furnished every year; the generally received opinion, that the best manager is the most sparing of punishment; the vigilance of the tribunals to repress the abuse of the master's authority, all announce, that in the French colonies exist sentiments of justice and humanity, which greatly alleviate the chains of slavery.

Every thing is done to make them good christians.

The Spaniards, more familiar with their slaves, indulge a kind of vanity in teaching them more prayers and more catechism than are known to the generality of christians. It is true they never cultivate their understanding sufficiently to make them comprehend the meaning of the doctrine which is inculcated on them; the whole process consists in teaching them like parrots to articulate certain sounds, which is accomplished in the course of time and retained by dint of frequent repetition. The master acts as a kind of inquisitor towards his slave; obliges him to perform all those exercises of devotion which are commanded by religion, or have been established by custom, and deprives him as lies in his power, of every opportunity of becoming addicted to the vice of incontinence. In the country as well as in the city, every young female slave is locked up at night from the age of ten, till she gets married.

They keep a sharp eye over their proceedings and allow them to be as little as possible out of their immediate inspection; but this extreme vigilance is

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far from having the desired effect. The painful restraints under which they are kept, tend to irritate, instead of appeasing their desires; the consequence is, that notwithstanding the apparent circumspection of the masters, the licentiousness of Spanish slaves is as great as that of the slaves of other colonies. If one would but take the trouble of minutely observing, he would soon discover that the habit of constraint disposes the former to be more prompt and less punctilious in the preludes of gallantry; more ardent to avail themselves of a precious opportunity; less delicate in their choice, and more wavering in their attachments. To these considerations add that of their extreme indigence, and you can at once ascertain the cause and extent of their prostitution. Frequently, very frequently are they seduced and supported in their vicious course by those very persons whose duty it is to be the guardians of their morals. How many wives united to their husbands in the sacred bonds of matrimony daily see the nuptial bed polluted by their own slaves, without being able to revenge themselves upon the caprice by which they are injured, but by indulging inclinations equally guilty, which they have not always an equal opportunity of gratifying! But this question would lead me too far beyond the limits which my subject prescribes.

Carelessness of Masters with respect to their Slaves.

Prayer is the only article of provision for which a Spanish slave is indebted to his master. His food and clothing make but a very small, if any item of the account; and the law, which appears upon all occa-

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sions to be very favourable to liberty, is entirely silent upon these important articles. The consequence is, that with the exception of a small number of proprietors, whose hearts are not altogether callous to the sentiments of humanity, they all keep their slaves with scarcely a rag to cover their nakedness, do not allow them any provisions, but what they raise themselves, upon a small spot of ground allotted to them for that purpose. Whether the season be favourable; whether the crop be abundant or scanty; in a word, whether the slave wallow in the enjoyment of plenty, or have not a crust to eat, all that is a matter of perfect indifference to the proprietor. It is easy to conjecture that theft, decay and mortality, must be the inevitable consequence of such wretched management. The subsistence of the household slaves is as badly provided for as that of the field slaves. The rations allowed them for the whole day is scarcely sufficient for breakfast. Intrigue, rapine, debauchery must supply what is wanting.—They receive no other clothing than what is called the livery suit, because they only wear them when they follow in the train of their masters. As soon as they return home, they are either stripped as naked as worms, or covered with such tatters as deserve not the name of garments. Their treatment is different in the French colonies; for there, both house and field slaves are provided with a new suit at least once every year.

In sickness, the Spanish slaves are entirely abandoned, to die or recover as nature determines. Not a single plantation is provided with a physician; and

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very rarely is any to be found even in the village where it lies. All the assistance which art affords to the poor slaves, whose constitutions are materially impaired by the fatigue of hard labour, is limited to the use of a few plants, which old women recommend, or administer without judgment or discrimination. In our plantations on the contrary, every day, at least every other day, a physician goes through his routine of duty according to positive agreement, and visits hospitals, abundantly provided with medicine, even if they should contain no patients to require his assistance. Since I am so far advanced in the disagreeable task of telling severe truths, I must likewise say, that the slaves who live in the cities are almost equally neglected. The physician is rarely called till interest becomes alarmed at the danger of property. I have even seen masters, who, on the supposition of their slaves being possessed of some paltry resource, or shift of industry, obliged them to pay for medicine. I am assured that this is a general custom, although I confess I had not courage to make any direct inquiry. I am aware that personal pride, galled by this humliating representation, and the shame of appearing to have so much religion and so little humanity, will prompt a great number of individuals to prefer their claims of exception; I am willing to grant them all, provided they put their application on that footing.

Such a mode of management loudly calls for a salutary reform. But local circumstances require that it should be promoted by an easy and gradual progression. To attack abuses in an open and direct manner; to attempt to suppress them with too much precipita-

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tion, is only to run the risk of creating unavailing commotion, more calculated to prepetuate than to terminate the evil. Besides, in a country where masters themselves enjoy upon their plantations but few of the conveniences of life, it is not reasonable to expect that slaves should be allowed by law, more than the indispensable necessaries of life, that is a comfortable diet and homely dress. It is from the appearance of extending too much indulgence to that unhappy class of mortals, that the local authority does not permit the royal ordinance of the 31st of May, 1789, to be carried into execution.

Reforms contemplated.

The first article of that ordinance recommends to masters to instruct their slaves in the christian doctrines, to make them observe holy-days and sabbaths, and to have upon their plantations, priests to say mass upon the particular days prescribed by the church.

The second article orders that comfortable food and clothing be allowed to the slaves, the quantity and quality of which is to be determined by the tribunals.

By the third article, the labour of each slave is to be rated by the police judges. The person who suggested this idea undoubtedly thought that the plantations lay so contiguous to one another, and formed such clean and commodious streets, as to render it easy for the magistrate, even without the trouble of changing his slippers, to make the round of his official visits; whereas there are plantations at the distance of twenty or thirty leagues from the civil officer, who

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has the nearest place of residence. This same ordinance subject to the assessment of labour only male slaves, who are come to the age of seventeen years; and exempts all those who have reached the age of sixty. The slaves of both sexes are not allowed to be engaged in promiscuous labour. By such measures it is much easier to make monks than cultivators of the soil.

The amusements of the slaves upon rest days are regulated by the fourth article: they must be innocent, and without the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes.

The fifth article prescribes to masters to lodge their slaves in commodious and spacious houses, where, above all things, care must be taken to keep the sexes separate: every slave must have a bed furnished with blankets, &c. and his chamber apart. Whatever may be the urgency of the occasion, he is forbidden to put more than two of them in the same room; that is to say, the slave is to be better provided for than a great many of the proprietors, who are obliged to sleep upon hides, and have frequently, for the accommodation of a numerous family, but one miserable leaky cabin.

The rest of the ordinance, consisting of 14 articles, contains arrangements exhibiting equally striking proofs of the ignorance of the person who devised them. By attempting to do too much, nothing has been effected in favour of these unfortunate creatures, whose wretchedness might have been alleviated, had the law been dictated by a spirit of intelligence, equally attentive to local circumstances, as to the claims of humanity.

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As some compensation for the ungenerous treatment experienced by the Spanish slaves, the law, to soften the rigour of their lot, gives them some resources entirely unknown in the colonies of other nations.

Advantages which the Laws offer to Slaves.

In every other country, the slave is condemned for life to suffer under an unjust master. Amongst the Spaniards, he may quit the domain of him who abuses the right he has over his person. The law, however, requires that he should specify his reasons; but the judge who adminsters the law is easily satisfied on that point. The most trifling allegation, whether true or false, is sufficient to compel the master to sell the slave who does not wish any longer to serve him. He is not allowed to exact an exorbitant price. He must sell at whatever price he purchased him; and further, it must not exceed 300 dollars, whatever talent or qualification he may have to recommend him. All that has been advanced for him above that sum, is charged to the caprice of the purchaser, which cannot militate against the privilege which the law secures to the slave, of endeavouring to better his situation by changing his master. If his value suffer any diminution on account of bodily infirmities, the judge orders an estimate to be made, which fixes the real price of the slave who makes the application.

Every slave, therefore, has it in his power to effect his own redemption by refunding to his master the sum which he originally cost him, or by paying down the sum of 300 dollars, in case he has advanced

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more than that amount. A written acknowledgment of the payment is considered as a sufficient document of his manumission, and entitles him to the rank of a citizen without the interference of either the law or fiscal department in a transaction of such importance, that all other nations have subjected it to more authentic forms attended with very considerable expense.

No master, without being severely reprimanded by the magistrate, can inflict upon his slave chastisements which occasion any loss of blood.

To conclude, in order to support the rights of slaves, and shield them from the vexatious persecution of masters, there is appointed within the jurisdiction of every governor an attorney, commonly called the poor's attorney, who is charged with all the proceedings necessary to vindicate the cause of such slaves as apply for redress. That institution alone affords sufficient proof of the foresight and wisdom of the legislator.

Freed-Men.

In all modern colonies, cultivated by slaves, emancipation is solely obtained from the generosity of the master, but is more frequently conferred on the object and offspring of his illegitimate embraces. But most governments, far from encouraging such acts, on the contrary, embarrass them, with such formalities and incidental charges, as to render them difficult, expensive and unfrequent. Amongst the Spaniards alone, every thing concurs to multiply them; religion ranks emancipation among the works that are most agreeable to God; the law imposes no

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constraint upon the will of the master with respect to this particular, and the department of finance has not yet laid it under contribution. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Spanish possessions have more freed-men and descendants of freed-men than slaves.

Their Number.

In fact, in a population of seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand persons, which the captain-generalship of Caraccas contains, it is computed that there are two hundred and ninety-one thousand two hundred freed-men and descendants of freed-men.

That class is more particularly known, amongst the Spaniards and elsewhere, under the general name of people of colour.

Restrictions laid on Liberty.

The transition from slavery to the exercise of the plenary rights of citizenship has not been sudden in any age or country.

At Lacedemon the freed-men were not admitted to the assemblies of the people, and held no office in the government. At Athens the liberty of the freed-men was not entire. The master still continued to have a certain kind of authority over him. He owed some respect, as well as public and private services to his old master, which if he neglected to render, he forfeited his liberty.

The Romans were equally far from regarding the freed-men as citizens. At first they were obliged to shave their heads, and wear a kind of cap which was the emblem of liberty. They were bound to repair,

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twice every day, to their master's houses, and to assist them in case of poverty. The neglect of these duties was punished by the forfeiture of their liberty, and by condemnation to the mines.

What induced the ancients to withhold from freedmen a part of the political rights, was the danger which their ignorance of the social duties might occasion to the public tranquillity. On breaking their chains, they bound them, as it were, to serve an apprenticeship to the social life, from which, however, their descendants were exempted. Reason and justice required this restriction, but required no more; and their decision was deemed sacred.

The nations who formed the modern colonies, having commerce for their sole object, have proceeded entirely on the principles of calculation. By commercial speculation slavery was introduced into them. To the augmentation of merchandise were uniformly referred all the regulations which were framed for them.

From an error in principle, no power possessing colonial territories conceived that unlimited emancipation could be prejudicial to social order. All the laws relative to that subject gave the freed-man immediate access to the enjoyment of all political rights. The black code, sent by France to her colonies, in 1685, a period when they scarce deserved the name of establishment, says, article lix. "we grant to the "freed-men the same rights, privileges and immu- "nities, which free-born persons enjoy; and it is "our will, that they should deserve the liberty which "has been conferred upon them; and that it should

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" produce in them, as well with respect to their per-
" sons as property, the same effects which their bless-
" ing of natural liberty causes to our other subjects."

Causes of these Restrictions.

But experience soon made it appear, that the sudden concession of all the social rights to freed-men, was productive of many more inconveniences in the new colonies than among the other nations who possessed slaves; and that consequently, it was necessary that they should be still more circumspect on that point than the Greeks and Romans had been. These indeed had nothing to dread but from the irregularities of the freed-men, who were unacquainted with civil liberty.

The European colonies had this same subject of apprehension, besides many others which were essentially connected with their preservation. They were appreciated by the nations to which they belonged according to the species and quantity of their productions. Situated in the torrid zone, and subject to the influence of those numerous physical causes which prove so unfavourable to the health, and so fatal to the lives of those who were born in the temperate zones, they found themselves unable to cultivate the soil without having recourse to men inured to the same climate ; and the lot fell upon the Africans. The number of these cultivators increased, by reason of the great profits accruing from their labour to the European proprietors, and soon became so considerable, that in almost all the French and English colonies they were found, with respect to

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the whites, in proportion of twenty to one. On contemplating, with emotions of fear and alarm, the rapid increase of the Africans, destined by their gratuitous labour to enrich masters whom they must detest, it was found necessary to devise means to give permanence to a dependence which supplied an inexhaustible source of riches to government and to individuals. The gradual augmentation of troops, which appeared to be the most effectual expedient, was attended with the disadvantage of proportionably augmenting the colonial expenses, and consequently diminishing the mass of profits. Had they determined to employ physical force alone, the military establishment would have exhausted all their resources. Under all these views, the colonial system had more to rely on the advantages arising from an artful and imposing policy, than from the continual presence of an armed force. Accordingly, they attached such consideration to the European complexion, that every white person was regarded by law and opinion, as being of a superior nature to any directly or indirectly connected with Africa. Excepting the articles of nourishment and cloathing, the slave had no other rights than those of common humanity. Obedience became his best, his only safeguard. Placed at so great a distance from the white, even liberty did not enable him to surmount the barrier of prejudice which separated them. By making him independent of a master, it only insured him a more effectual protection from the law, without thereby acquiring the exercise of political rights. By these means, the freed-men formed, between the slave and

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the master an intermediate rank, which cannot associate with the white till by the aid of successive generations the African blood is supplied by the European. Prejudice frequently goes still farther.

Upon these principles the European colonies are constituted, with this difference only, that each of them has been more or less severe in their application, conformably to the policy and manners of their respective governments.

It is generally believed that the laws are more favourable to people of colour in the Spanish colonies, than in those of other nations. This opinion, founded solely on conjecture, has undoubtedly obtained credit from the spirit of religion which is supposed to preside over all the actions of the Spaniards. Politics and religion afford one another mutual assistance; but whenever a sacrifice is to be made by the one to the other, it is generally made by the latter in favour of the former. Thus in the laws relative to freed-men, government consulted exclusively the good order, tranquility and stability of its possessions.

The first regulations made upon this subject prove, that a century had nearly past before they followed the counsels of prudence with respect to the rank which was to be assigned to the freed-men in society. If they did not before that hold so high a place in the public esteem as the Europeans, it was less on account of their being freed-men or men of colour, than on account of the prejudice almost generally attached to that class of men who are born out of wedlock; for, legitimate children of whatever colour, were allowed to enjoy the same rights as other citizens. Victoria and Zapata, two celebrated lawyers of the seven-

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teenth century, write in defence of this order of things.

Several ordinances about the end of the seventeenth century declare, that free-men of colour have a right to the same honours, and the same employs as other Spanish citizens.

An ordinance of the 28th Sept. 1588, enjoins the admission of all men of colour to the priesthood, provided they have the necessary qualifications; and that, upon the same principle, the colour of women who would wish to become nuns should not be an obstacle to their admission.

Freed-men can hold no Public Office.

Restrictions very closely follow these unlimited concessions; for, by an ordinance of the 7th June, 1621, it was prohibited to confer upon men of colour any public office, even that of notary, who, according to the Spanish judiciary arrangements, fulfils at the same time, the duties of notary, recorder, and constable. The royal ordinance of the 15th July, 1643, and 23d March, 1654, declare men of colour incapable of serving in the royal troops. They employ them, however, in defence of the country. They are formed into particular corps of militia in which merit may raise a man of colour to the rank of captain. All superior officers must be taken from amongst the whites.

The Law subjects them to an Impost which they do not pay.

All negroes and mulattoes of both sexes, like the Indians, have been subjected to a personal tax; but

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the ordinance which imposes it is not executed in the extent of the captain-generalship of Caraccas. The law is, however, so much the more express, as it ordains, in order to facilitate the collection of that impost, that the residence of the negroes should be only at the houses of persons of some notoriety.

Sumptuary Laws with respect to Freed-men.

Another ordinance debars women of colour from wearing gold, silk, mantles or pearls. But this restriction is not enforced. At present they are permitted to regulate their costume according to their pecuniary means, which are more or less abundantly supplied, according to their age and personal attractions. It may be affirmed as a truth, that of all the women of colour in Terra-Firma, nineteen out of twenty have no other shift to depend upon, and it must be confessed at the same time, that they have generally the talent to make the most of it. The white women, who are too frequently mortified by the rivalship of women of colour, not to entertain considerable prejudice against them, have always asserted the exclusive privilege of using in church carpets which are carried there by their servants. She who has one drop of African blood flowing in her veins, must not pretend to this piece of convenience. The petticoats of those women whose complexions are tinged by the slightest shade of black, are condemned to be soiled by the dusty floor of the church, whilst their delicate knees must bend upon the hard flags.

Free persons of colour, however rich they may be, are not allowed to have Indians in their service.

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Case in which a Freed-man returns to Slavey.

The freed-man or his descendant who absconds for four months is a again reduced to slavery, and becomes the property of the person who takes him, unless his captor prefers the sum of fifty milled dollars, to be paid by the police, to whom the prisoner is in that case to be surrendered, and to become their property.

The King gives Dispensations with respect to People of Colour.

The rigour which the law is observed to exercise towards people of colour is not unfrequently mitigated by the interposition of patronage. It is not uncommon for the law to grant dispensations to men of colour, either to qualify them for entering into holy orders, or for becoming candidates for civil employments. The real or supposed merit of the party is of considerable importance in supporting his pretensions, but he must at least be a mulatto, to entitle him to the right of making any solicitation. Were the negro a nonpareil of science, and a pattern of virtue, he must not aspire at any such favours.

When money can create a powerful interest, and give animation to the zeal of patrons, entire families are, according to a royal ordinance, transferred from the class of freemen of colour to that of whites. It is unlawful to reproach them with the viciousness of their origin; and they are declared competent for exercising any public function.

During my stay at Caraccas, a whole family of co-

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lour obtained from the king all the privileges attached to the whites. All the real advantage which they derived from this advancement seemed to me to devolve upon the women, who thereby acquired the right of kneeling upon carpets at church. Vain of this newly acquired privilege, they displayed, in the exercise of it, such ostentation and extravagance as could afford no gratification but to vulgar pride. I was informed, by respectable authority, that this royal favour, at whatever price it might have been procured, would effect very little change in the public opinion favourable to the family in question, and that none of its members would ever be called to the exercise of public functions, so long as their complexion would betray their origin. This evinces how far prejudices are paramount to laws. They are formed and destroyed by time, or by the aid of those political commotions, which, by deranging the head, derange likewise the opinions of men.

Marriages between Whites and People of Colour.

Marriages between freemen of colour and whites, although not prohibited by the laws, till a very late period, are not viewed in a more favourable light here than elsewhere. The first families are particularly careful to avoid such a mixture. Upon this article, they are even more scrupulous than French noblemen, who have frequently gone to the colonies for the express purpose of repairing, by a matrimonial connexion, a fortune wrecked by losses or misconduct. In these cases they despised prejudice. They cared nothing about colour, provided it was not ab-

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solutely black. Riches were the great desiderata, and made up for every thing else. They returned to France with their tawny consorts, where their Creole birth detracted nothing from their consequence in polite society.

It is true, there are no inducements for such alliances in the Spanish settlements, where people of colour are generally so indigent, that those who enjoy the easiest circumstances live from hand to mouth. Nothing, therefore, but the beauty and attractions of a girl of colour could tempt a noble Spaniard to contract a legal union with an object, who would refuse, on any other consideration, to admit him to her favours. But in a country, where there are so many means of gratifying passion, such a sacrifice is hardly to be expected. Besides, the virtue of girls of this class is too frail to resist seduction, and their circumstances no ways adequate to support their notions of luxury, to be able to prefer modesty under every privation, to intrigue, which knows none.

Hence it is, that alliances between families of colour and distinguished Spanish families have very rarely occurred. Such connexions have been pretty common among the lower classes of the whites, till in the year 1785, a royal ordinance expressly required, for the validity of marriages, that the consent of parents should be obtained, or at least requested, according to the forms prescribed by the laws, and that the difference of colour should constitute a reason sufficient to prevent marriages, conformably to the pragmatic sanction of 1776, which prohibits all marriages between whites and persons of colour. After this

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arrangement, prejudice resumed all the ascendancy which time had destroyed.

Until that period, the Creoles of the Canary Isles were least averse to such marriages. From that time they are as delicate on this point as other whites, and it may be affirmed with truth, that marriages of this kind are far from being frequent at the present day.

Some are yet to be seen between people of *colour* and whites.

Those still to be seen are between white girls and men of colour. This particularity demands an explanation, which I give with reluctance.

It arises from the horrible custom of exposing children who are the offspring of illegitimate commerce.

In the Spanish settlements, as in every other part of the world, there are females, who, with all the weakness characteristic of too many of their sex, allow themselves to be carried away from the paths of virtue, by the warmth of constitutional propensity, the seduction of love, or the imperious calls of domestic want. Women of this description, who, for the honour of their sex, are far from being numerous, find it much easier to gratify, than to subdue their desires. Such is their depravity, that in the preliminary arrangements of their amorous intercourse, the only difficulty that occurs is with respect to the choice of a convenient place; as soon as appearances are saved, all the rest goes on like clock-work. From that illicit commerce, frequently result consequences, which detach the father, and overwhelm the mother

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with the agonies of despair. Nature in these cases too often thwarted and counteracted, has to struggle against the criminal efforts of a mother, whose object is to destroy in embryo a deposit, which, if allowed to arrive to the maturity of a birth, must prove a lasting monument of her shame. If, in spite of these unnatural efforts, the offspring of her embraces is safely ushered into the world, her prospect on recovery is miserable indeed. The mildest treatment which the unfortunate babe can expect, is to be exposed at the entrance of some house, before the gate of some church, or in the open street. The unjust prejudice which attaches to this kind of maternity, public contempt, and family disgrace, are the only reasons that can be assigned for the shocking proceedings which follow the misfortunes of pregnancy and delivery. A white girl is for ever undone if she is proclaimed mother, if she pays the due honour to nature; but suffers nothing in her reputation, however well grounded the suspicion may be of her abandoned depravity.

It is observed that these new born infants, when thus exposed, are generally picked up by women of colour, sometimes by black women. The male children are early received into convents, churches, &c. but the female share the poverty of their foster-fathers, till they get married; and one need not be informed that when bred by persons of colour, and altogether destitute of fortune, they are under the necessity of giving their hands to the first man of colour who asks it. Such disadvantages, and others far more serious, which might more emphatically be called

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misfortunes, arise from that savage custom of exposing to the too often lukewarm pity of the faithful, or to the voracity of animals, innocent babes, from whom mothers withhold the tenderness which tigresses lavish on their whelps. But of what use is this declamation?—it may tend to irritate instead of correcting. The causes of these evils are too deeply rooted to be extirpated by reasoning. A ridiculous pride, called family honour, dispenses with the practice of virtue, but not with the appearance of honouring it. Under an exterior show of decency one may indulge himself in vice, may gratify all his desires, yield to all his passions, provided he loudly censures a similar conduct in others. To undertake the reform of such morals is to declare war against hypocrisy, which will always be victorious in a country where every individual studies to make a display of false virtues, in order to disguise real vices. Intrigue and prostitution, therefore, will always pursue their successful career, whilst the bold task of endeavouring to destroy their effects, will neither be augmented nor diminshed in its efforts.

The Necessity of Hospitals for Foundlings.

All that can be claimed with any appearance of success is, that the magistrate should at length prepare in every city an asylum, where the infants, who experience nothing but barbarity from their mothers, may receive the aliment, attention and education, which their country owes them. We see, in all the provinces of Caraccas, and in the city of Caraccas itself, churches richly endowed, religious establish-

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ments of every kind, and not a single public hospital for foundlings. Does not piety, a virtue justly deified by the ancients, hold the most conspicuous place in the catalogue of those virtues, which constitute humanity. Can we, then, be pious without being humane? Is there any humanity in leaving a child just come into existence, exposed at the corner of a street, or the threshold of a gate, to be devoured by dogs or hogs, unless some poor free negro woman take charge of it, rather to mingle her tears with the craving cries of the child, than to afford it nourishment and clothing, which she has not for herself? A disorder so shocking requires a prompt reform, and the magistrates have reason to regret that they have neglected it so long. But I return to my subject.

Freed-men can practise Medicine.

Freemen of colour are by no means fond of culture, nor indeed of any employment which requires personal labour. Yet they all have trades, which the whites, who are equally indisposed to labour, allow them to exercise without any competition. They were formerly debarred from the practice of medicine; but they were admitted to it by the royal ordinance of the 14th of March, 1797; and by a decree of the audience of Caraccas, it was prohibited to give any molestation to that description of physicians, or to any that should thereafter be added to it, until the white physicians should receive such an increase of their number, as would be sufficient for the population. It is even pretended, that they make improvements in that profession, of which they were thought incapable. (See the chapter on diseases.)

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CHAPTER IV.

PORTRAIT OF THE INDIANS BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS:—MEANS EMPLOYED TO CIVILIZE THEM.

How America has been peopled—Smallness of the population—Governments which are found there—Division of the population—Physical and moral constitution of the Indians—Their propensity to war—Unworthy manner in which they carried it on. Causes which put an end to wars—Religion of the Indians—They believe in the immortality of the Soul—Their priests were likewise physicians—Studies for the priesthood and physic united—Medicines used—Particular gifts of the Piaches—Witchcraft—Reflection—Religious ideas of the Oronoko Indians—Effect of eclipses on the Indians—They worship toads—Idols—Opinion with respect to the state of the soul after death—Funerals of the Oronoko Indians—Of the Salives—Of the Guaraunos—Of the Aruacas—Idle and sottish lives of the Indians—Exception in favour of the Otomacs—Indians who eat earth—Turtle-fishery—Marriages—Deplorable situation of the Oronoko women—Polygamy—Divorce—Adultery—Exchange of wives—Education of children—Hatred of sons against fathers—Dress—Indians not reduced—Guaraunos—Guajiros—Their relations with Rio-de-la-Hache—With the English—Serious interest of the Spanish government to reduce these Indians—Civilized Indians—Excessive mildness of the laws in their favour—Measures to keep them in dependence—Their privileges—Distinguished favours which the church grants them—Melancholy results—Difficulty of making them citizens—Greater still of making them christians—How the Indians ought to be treated—New regulations for the Indians—Result of those regulations.

How America has been peopled.

According to the rules of historical composition, an account of the origin of the people, whose country is to be described, ought to form an introduction to the work. Before, therefore, I speak of the Americans, whom, in imitation of the Spaniards I shall call Indians, I ought to relate how America received its first population; but this task is the more difficult to perform, as that remarkable event occured at so

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remote a period as to leave the historian bewildered in the regions of conjecture.

All the learned men who have undertaken to discuss this important question, have presented such contradictory results as will impress posterity with a conviction that none of them are authentic. The opinion which is most generally received, and which, by its simplicity precludes all further researches, is, that the new world, originally forming a part of the old continent, was detached from it by one of those dismemberments, which deluges and earthquakes can alone produce. What confirms this opinion, are the numerous instances of similar concussions of nature, to which are to be ascribed so many revolutions upon the globe. What detracts from its force, is the difference of the animals, under the same latitudes of the old and new continents.

There are some who pretend to find it upon record, that in the ninth century the Norwegians had opened a communication with Greenland, which was afterwards interrupted by fortuitous causes, and, owing to the slow progress of improvement, was not resumed until the sixteenth century. From this fact they boldly infer, that at epochs still more remote, the Norwegians had been able to penetrate as far as Greenland, and to plant there a population which in the course of time, extended over the whole continent of America. This supposition is supported by a striking resemblance discovered between the characters of the Greenlanders and the Esquimaux, by which it would appear that these two nations were originally the same; for the similarity of their

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languages, manners and customs, would naturally indicate that the one gave population to the other. The honour of this event must be decided in favour of the Greenlanders, on account of their communication with the south-east of Europe, which renders it probable that their population preceded that of America.

But the most prevalent opinion is, that America has been peopled from the north-east of Asia, by Bearing Straits, so called after the name of its discoverer. It is about fifty miles broad. The similarity observed between the manners of the Indians and those of the Tartars, gives considerable plausibility to this opinion, and has secured it many adherents. Besides, it was natural rather to acquiesce in a theory supported by probability at least, than to undertake to form a new one, which, although founded upon more rational principles, might, in its turn, be overthrown and exploded.

Had I not promised my reader facts, and not hypotheses, I should perhaps have been tempted to introduce him into the labyrinth of conjectures, where, instead of dissipating his old doubts, I might perplex him with new ones. He will therefore excuse me, if I leave the question with respect to the first population of the new world in the same obscurity in which I found it, whilst I hasten to inform him of the state of the natives of Terra-Firma on the first arrival of the Europeans, as well as what it continues to be at the present day.

Smallness of the Population.

America was in general very thinly inhabited. This account of it is abundantly evident from the state in

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which the Europeans found the arts and agriculture, which, instead of flourishing, could hardly be said to exist. The man of nature, who depends for his subistence upon the spontaneous productions of the earth, and what further can be supplied by fishing and hunting, delights to range in the deepest recesses of the forest, on the sea-coast, or on the banks of rivers. Solitude is his sweetest enjoyment. He seeks not, he knows not the busy and contentious haunts of men.

Governments which were found there.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Indians were so savage, as even to be unacquainted with pastoral life. Mexico and Peru were the only countries which had begun to make some progress in civilization. Monarchs, possessed of absolute power over their subjects, were placed at the head of a kind of government, which seemed to originate from the necessity of forming an union, in order to repress the incursions of the neighbouring tribes. Bogota, now Santa Fe, formed the third government of America, more recent than the other two, and much worse organized. The first of these empires was less extensive than the present viceroyalty of Mexico; the second, which boasted of being the first, but could not establish its claim for the want of chronological documents, nearly corresponds with the viceroyalty of Lima. The third had scarcely the extent of one province.

All the rest of America was occupied by particular

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tribes of Indians. Each of these tribes was denominated a nation, although the number of which it consisted, scarcely amounted to a thousand, and but rarely exceeded ten thousand.

This is a summary statement of the population of America at the period when the Europeans discovered it, and introduced in their train an assemblage of virtues and vices, till then unknown there.

Subdivision of the Population.

The whole coast from cape de la Vela to the river Esequebo, and the mouths and border of the Oronoko, were occupied by this paltry population. The plains were thinly inhabited, because they were less productive of the spontaneous fruits of the earth, a subsistence the more agreeable to the savage, as it can be procured without labour. Besides, they are subject to inundations which render them uninhabitable a considerable part of the year.

They lived in scattered tribes; each had their territories marked out by particular boundaries, and in war, they were commanded by a chief variously stiled Cacique, Quebi, Tiva, or Guajiros, according to the language of the nation. Every chief was so jealous of encroachments upon his territory, that the smallest violation gave rise to bloody wars. Nothing shows so clearly the little communication which existed between these tribes, as the diversity of their languages, and multiplicity of their dialects. It was rare for a man who knew but one Indian language, to be able to make himself understood by more than one tribe. There was a kind

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of national pride which rendered them averse from learning the dialect of a neighbouring nation, and which contributed to restore to local words, the type which time or accidental communications had effaced.

All the Spanish writers who have spoken of the Indians, all the missionaries who were sent to civilize them, have found in their language a poverty, correspondent with that of their ideas. The celebrated La-Condamine, whose judgment is certainly entitled to respect, has made the same observation; and notwithstanding the desire which I have felt of recognizing in their languages a copiousness and richness which had not been discovered in them, I have not been able to obtain any other results but those which have been anticipated by former observers. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude, that a people naturally reserved, without exterior relations, without any religious system, who are unacquainted with the softer passions, with the riches of agriculture, and the advantages of commerce, have no need of a very extensive nomenclature, where it would be vain to search for such words as existence, fatality, mind, conception, &c. &c. I have however heard a great deal about the richness of the language of the Incas, which was spoken, and still continues to be spoken in the kingdom of Bogota, now Santa Fe; the proof which is given of it, is, that it is better calculated than the Spanish to express the tender emotions of love. But admitting this to be true, we are permitted to deny the consequence which is deduced from it, with respect to the richness of the language. The Creole

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dialect, which is spoken in the French colonies, is likewise, for the same reason, preferred to the French language; but it cannot be said that it is for its copiousness; on the contrary, it is for its simplicity and sweetness of accent, expressive of sincerity and truth, by which it softly gains the avenues of the heart, and under the guise of innocence, lays it open to seduction.

Physical and Moral Constitution of the Indians.

A few physical and moral traits are at once descriptive of the different Indian tribes. What they have in common with respect to their bodily frame, is the narrow forehead, eyes of middling size, hair black, lank and long, sharp nose, large mouth, thick lips, broad face, and big head; for their colour, generally copper, varies according to the temperature of the country in which they live, and their stature commonly from four feet and a half to five, is among other tribes from five to six. They have but little hair on those parts of the body where it naturally grows, but they are not altogether beardless. Their limbs, large and muscular, have the appearance of great strength, but that appearance is deceitful, as they with difficulty support hard labour. With respect to their moral qualities, laziness, taciturnity, thoughtlessness, stupidity and falsehood, generally characterize them. It is observed that those of them who live in the inland parts of the country are not so cruel as those upon the coasts. Very few of the former are Cannibals, whereas almost all the latter are. Men of this description, abandoned to the caprice

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of their own disposition, did not, and in fact could not know any other mode of settling a quarrel than having recourse to arms. Deprived, by the nature of their relations and interests, of those motives which kindle the flames of war among civilized nations, they made use of the most flimsy pretexts, and the most ridiculous allegations. Vindictive and ferocious, they found in war attractions unknown to a more polished people, and they pursued it with such desperate fury as resembled more the rage of a wild beast, than the valour of a warrior. Treachery and perfidy they ranked amongst the first military virtues.

Unworthy Manner in which they carried it on.

In order to aggravate the horrors of war, it was their general custom to tinge their arrows with poison, to massacre their prisoners, and frequently even to devour them. It was not the hope of booty, but an ardent thirst of revenge, which roused them to military enterprises. Their enemies had nothing to lose; for the whole equipage of the general, as well as of the soldier, consisted of a quiver filled with arrows, a club, a small bag of maize, and but rarely a mat. Their hamlets were no more than an assemblage of miserable huts without furniture, which the enemy might burn, but could not plunder. Thus the object of war was devastation, not conquest, destruction, not possession. Notwithstanding their continual devotion to bloodshed and devastation, never were two Indian armies seen to face one another in the open field, so true it is that cowardice is the concomitant of ferocity, as valour is of generosity. In Terra Firma, the

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Caribbees alone, who inhabited the borders of the Oronoko, attacked their enemy face to face, and acquired a reputation, which impressed all the other Indian tribes with terror. To their courage they owed the peaceable possession of an immense tract of country, upon which no other tribe dared attempt to settle.

Causes which put an end to war.

These horrid wars they continued to wage against one another till they were attacked by the Europeans at their respective homes. The common danger, as was natural, inspired the resolution to unite their forces against the enemies of their independence. Domestic quarrels were not at Terra Firma, as at Mexico and Peru, favourable to the Europeans; but what advantage did they derive from all their confederations? A carnage in proportion to the increase of their number. In the first chapter, we have seen that the Indians, however numerous, were unable to prevent the Spaniards from establishing themselves, wherever they fixed their choice. How often have forty or fifty Spaniards routed or cut to pieces four or five thousand Indians? There is not a creature on earth who, when occasion requires, discovers greater contempt for life than an Indian, or who is less willing to encounter death in the heat of action. Many travellers, and almost all writers, pretend that the Indians of North America make the noblest stand against their enemies, and the dearest sacrifice of their lives. Let these men warrant the bravery of the northern tribes, and I shall answer for the cowardice of the southern.

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Religion of the Indians.

In consequence of their pusillanimity, the Indians profess a religious system so involved in superstition, that it requires greater talents than mine to unravel it; or a presumption, which I do not possess, to advance as a certainty, what to discerning eyes might appear doubtful. It it besides so much the more difficult to convey a just idea of their religion, as the diversity of their rites indicate, that they have none which flows from a fixed and positive faith. At Mexico and Peru, government was supported by a kind of religious persuasion, whose practices, though barbarous, proved at least that they were founded on principles which were embraced by the whole nation.—But the scattered tribes of Terra Firma and Guiana, who were with respect to the Indians of those two empires, what the Russian Tartars are to the Europeans, had neither the genius necessary to meditate on the lot of humanity, nor ingenuity enough to form a system for themselves. Altogether destitute of intellectual powers, they were destined to be the dupes of the artifices and imposture of those amongst them who were naturally cunning and designing enough to speculate on their credulity.

They believe in the immortality of the soul.

All that the Indians believed, and continue to believe to the present day, with respect to what may be called fundamental principles, is, that man is possessed of an immortal soul, and they allow the brute which perisheth equally to partake of that glorious prerogative. This is the only point upon which

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these savages are agreed; for their opinions with respect to the destination of the soul after death vary according to the policy of their respective chiefs, and pontiffs.

It is observed that the Indians of Terra Firma admitted an evil principle only, whilst all the other barbarous tribes, have always admitted a good and an evil principle. This singularity may be ascribed to the timidity which marks their character.

Since we have no other means of ascertaining their theological opinions, we must descend to take a view of their gross superstition, and those ridiculous practices which supplied the place of worship.

Their Priests were also their Physicians.

In the countries which at present compose the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaibo and Cumana, the clerical profession was united with the medical. The same person exercised the functions of both priest and physician; and his preparatory course of instruction was principally directed to the latter.

Studies for the priesthood and medicine united.

They were from their infancy taught medicine and magic. As soon as they had acquired the elementary principles of these two sciences, which were inseparable, they had totally to seclude themselves for two years from society, and to retire to caverns and the recesses of the forest. During that time they entirely abstained from animal food, saw no

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person, not even their relations. The old Piaches or Doctors attended at night, to give them instruction. When they were thought sufficiently learned, and the period of their taciturnity expired, they obtained the title of Piache, in virtue of which they acquired the right of healing, conjuring evil spirits, and predicting futurity.

Medicines used.

For medicine, they make use of herbs and roots raw, boiled, or pounded with fat, wood and other things unknown to the vulgar; but they are never applied without pronouncing some magical words, which the physician himself does not understand. Thus prepared, they were applied as poultices or plasters to the part affected, in order, as they said, to extract the bad humours. If the pain or fever increased, they rubbed the whole body of the patient with their hand, and sucked his joints. This exercise was accompanied with some unintelligible jargon, emphatically expressed, containing, as the Piache alledged, a serious summons to the evil spirit to come out of the body of the patient. When the disorder appeared obstinate, they had recourse to a kind of wood, known only to the Piache. He rubbed strongly the mouth and neck of the patient, who soon gave an account of the contents of his stomach. The Piache, on his part, made frightful exclamations, cried, howled, quaked, and made a thousand contortions: at length he perspired profusely, and

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vomited some slimy matter in the midst of which was a ball, which the people of the house immediately took up, and throwing it, said: you are going to be cast out, devil, you are going to be cast out. If the patient recovered, they gave every thing in the house to the Piache; if he died, the blame was laid upon fate, not upon the physician.

Particular gifts of the Piaches.

The Piaches were, ex officio, admitted to all the secrets of futurity. They foretold whether there would be peace or war; whether it would be a year of scarcity or abundance; whether there would be good fishing, and whether fish would sell high; they prognosticated eclipses and comets, in short, if we are to believe Lopez De Gomara, they were the genuine nostradamus of this rude and extremely ignorant people. Their prophecies, as well as their treatment of patients, were purchased at a high price.—The consequence was that the Piaches engrossed all the riches of the country. They were regarded with a respect and awe which bordered on superstition. Their influence amounted to absolute power, of which, however, they made little use. Their prerogatives were numerous. The most prominent, and what furnishes the best criterion to form a judgment of the rest, was that which gave them a positive, undisputed right to the bridal bed in cases of adoptive or supernumerary marriages.

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Sorcery.

It was solemnly believed by the Indians, whether savage or civilized, and even by the Spaniards, that bodily disorders always arise from sorcery practised by some enemy. The Indians frequently accuse a Piache, without however daring to reproach him, because his order alone has the power of removing him.

Funerals of the Indians of Terra Firma.

The common opinion of all the Indians of Terra Firma was, that the soul, when separated from the body, cannot subsist without food. They made woeful lamentations at funerals, and celebrated, in their songs, the exploits of the deceased. They interred the corpse in the house with some provisions laid beside it; or they dried it at the fire, and hung it up. If the deceased was of a rank above the common, they celebrated his anniversary, by assembling all his friends under the strict injunction of each carrying along with him his share of the entertainment. This ceremony, which somewhat resembled the ancient orgies, was performed during night. They took up the corpse, if they had it interred; and the whole night was spent in drinking, dancing, and howling.

Reflection.

We see from this miserable superstition, that such was the stupidity of the Indians, that they never

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thought of searching for the first cause of the wonderful order of nature. Insensible of the blessings conferred upon them, they tendered no homage to the author; he was the object neither of their admiration nor their gratitude. They possessed only the figure of man; their mental faculties bespoke them a degraded species, nearer the brute than the human.

The Oronoko Indians, without being much better informed, or less superstitious, had however imagined a creator of all things, to whom they addressed their vows and adoration. Some tribes, says father Caulin, took the sun for the supreme being: to him they attributed the productions of the earth, the scarcity or abundance of the rains, and all temporal blessings.

Effects of the eclipses on the Indians.

Others thought that these virtues were to be ascribed to the moon; they considered her eclipses as dreadful signs of her anger.

As soon as they perceived any of them coming on, the credulous Indians began their ridiculous ceremonies, with a view to avert the punishment, with which they thought themselves threatened on account of their laziness and ingratitude. The men struck up their warlike instruments, or siezed their arms to show their valour, cut down trees with mighty exertion, or betook themselves to other laborious exercises, to prove to the moon that they could not be taxed with effeminacy, or punished without injustice. The women ran out of their houses,

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threw up into the air, maize and other kinds of grain, with lamentable cries, promising to amend their manners and to become more industrious. When the eclipse was over, they congratulated themselves on having deceived the moon with vain promises; after that, they had a dance which ended like all their feasts, in complete drunkenness and the most abominable acts of intemperance. The savage Indians still preserve all these customs; and the conquered Indians have not entirely abandoned them.

They worship Toads.

There were likewise on the borders of the Oronoko, Indians who rendered the honours of divinity to toads. Far from doing them any harm, they carefully kept them under the cover of vessels, in order to obtain from them rain or fair weather, as occasion required; and they were so fully persuaded that toads had power to grant it, that they beat them every time their prayers were not promptly complied with.

They Worship Idols.

Some of these tribes had no other worship than dancing to the sound of very noisy instruments, before two small idols, to which they addressed their devotions, singing some extemporary hymns to them.

Opinion with respect to the state of the soul after death.

All the Indians are agreed, as has been said, with respect to the immortality of the soul, but are at variance

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with respect to what becomes of it after death. Some think that the soul enjoys repose in the same field which the body cultivated when alive; others imagine that it is conveyed to certain lakes in the belly of a huge serpent, which hushers it into a delightful land, where it passes its time in dancing and quaffing.

When an Indian kills a wild beast, he opens its mouth and makes it swallow an intoxicating draught, that the soul of the dead animal may report to the rest of his species, the good reception he has met with, and that they may be encouraged to come and partake of the same favour; accordingly they wait for them in the persuasion that they will come without fear.

The Indians of the *Palanka* nation are never engaged in any numerous hunting party, without making the oldest huntsman drink one or two large bumpers of the strongest liquor, till unable to swallow more, he discharges the whole contents of his stomach. After that they lead him about as much as they can, that the soul of the drunken Indian, which they believe to be wafted on the blast, may inform the game that there is likewise something for them to drink, and persuade them that instead of running away, they should approach and let themselves be killed.

Funerals of the Oronoko Indians.

Amongst the Oronoko Indians, there appears such a diversity of customs with respect to their funerals as indicate that they are far from being uniform in this.

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in their religious opinions, or in their manner of worship. The reader will permit me to lay before him a few instances in support of this observation.

Of the Salive Indians.

The Funerals of Indians of distinction among the Salives afford an opportunity for the display of whatever is remarkable and particular in the nation. They place the tomb in the middle of the house where the personage died. Stakes, painted with different colours and representing all the emblems of sadness and mourning, form a circle around it. The widow, without finery or painting, sits constantly beside the corpse. Every visitant who arrives, weeps bitterly before he enters, whilst their woeful cries are echoed from within; soon after this, assuming an air of gaiety, they drink and dance. It will at once gratify the curiosity and excite the surprise of the reader to be told of so sudden a transition from excessive grief to excessive joy; from a burst of unfeigned tears, to peals of unaffected laughter. They perform very singular dances to the sound of funeral instruments, which one cannot hear without horror; so well are they adapted to these sorts of ceremonies. When fatigued they take some few hours of repose. To crown all, after three days very violent exercise, during which they do nothing else but dance, sing and drink, the whole company march in procession to the river, and plunge into it the tomb and its contents, together with every thing that belong to the de-

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ceased; after which they all wash themselves and retire to their respective homes.

Of the Guaraunos.

As soon as a Guarauno Indian dies, his companions take up the corpse and throw it into the Oronoko tied with a cord which they fasten to a tree. On the following day they drag out the carcase, when they find it a skeleton perfectly clean and white, stript of the flesh which has been devoured by fish. They disjoint the bones and lay them up curiously in a basket, which they hang from the roof of the house.

Of the Aroacas.

The Aroacas inter their dead with a great deal of pomp; the arms of the deceased are buried along with him. One point of their rude doctrine is, that the earth must not touch the corpse; and therefore, they lay under it a very thick bed of Banana leaves. The Achagoas do not observe this custom but with respect to their captains and caciques, with this further particularity, that they cover the place of interment with a coat of good mortar, and go every morning carefully to fill up the chinks occasioned by the drought, in order to prevent the ants from disturbing the dead. Several other nations, particularly the Betoyes, under the influence of a contrary prejudice, think that the sooner the corpse is consumed by the ants, the better.

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Of the Caribbees.

Amongst the Caribbees the corpse of a captain is put in a hammock and hung up in the house; they leave it there as in a bed of state, during a lunar revolution, that is to say, one month. All this time, the women of the deceased have, alternately, to keep watch on each side of the corpse, in order to prevent a single fly from lighting on the dead. In order to judge of the hardship of this duty, it is only necessary to be informed that the country inhabited by this nation lies almost under the equator, and in plains scorched by a vertical sun. One of these women is interred with the deceased captain; the preference is given to her by whom he has had offspring. At the end of a year, they proceed to disinter him: they collect his bones into a basket, which is hung up in the hut of his nearest relations.

The lazy and sottish life of the Indians.

The Indians maintain that there are not under the sun enjoyments more pure and exalted than intoxication and idleness. The strongest liquor is their favourite beverage. In former times their women prepared for them a kind of wine made of fruits, such as the *Ananas*, the *Corosol*, &c. to which fermentation gave a very considerable degree of strength. That liquor went under the name of Chiche: they have neglected to manufacture any since they found it easy to supply its place by rum, and other spirituous liquors equally intoxicating. The Indian passes his

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life between drinking and sleeping. With great reluctance he leaves his hammock only when the inclemency of the weather, rendering the agricultural labours of his wife unproductive, obliges him to go and hunt; then he concerts his measures with so much address as by the fatigue of one day to insure himself subsistence and repose for a whole week.

Exception in favour of the Otomaques.

The Otomaques, who inhabit the high grounds of the Oronoko, must be admitted as an exception to the general rule. More active and intelligent than the other Indians, before missionaries had arrived amongst them they passed their time in continual exercise and social joy. The only interruption they experienced in this career of life, was the time which they were accustomed to pass every morning in shedding tears for the dead, and the short interval of their repose, which lasted from midnight till three o'clock. The cock, who was their faithful time-keeper, gave them every day the signal to awake, when immediately a general cry was raised, lamentation and weeping for their departed friends. This wailing cry lasted till day; the joy which succeeded it, occupied the eighteen remaining hours.

At sunrise all the Otomaque Indians, capable of labour, repaired to the houses of their respective captains, who nominated those amongst them who were to go on that day to the fishing, in quest of turtles, or to the hunting of the wild boar, according to the season. In seed-time or harvest, a certain

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number was likewise destined for the labour of the fields, whose fruits were deposited in public granaries, in order to be afterwards divided by the chiefs. Never did an Indian of this tribe go two day successively to labour.

Exercise of Playing Ball amongst the Otomaques.

All the Otomaques whose turn it was not to go to the fishing, or labour of the day, went to the field to play ball, and did not quit till night. They played in a party of twelve against twelve, in a manner that deserves to be particularly mentioned here.

Their ball, which they still continue to use, is as big as the bowl used at mall. It is made of a kind of resin which they call caocho. The slightest touch made it spring as high as a man. Striking it with the right shoulder, they kept it continually playing from side to side; nor were they allowed to touch it with any other part of the body without forfeiting a fifteenth, or, as it is expressed in their own language, a point. The wonder is, that in this manner they keep up the ball bounding and rebounding from alternate sides with as much ease and velocity as the Biscayans do with the hand. Nor are they inferior to them for the regularity and decency with which this diversion is conducted. Before they begin the game, they choose judges who are to preside and to determine with respect to any differences or difficulties that may occur in the course of the game; and their decisions are acquiesced in without murmur. Those who do not play, make bets, and thus every person who is present feels an interest in the play.

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In the morning the women were engaged in manufacturing a coarse kind of earthen ware. Their most curious workmanship consisted of mats, baskets, and very neat bags. The material they made use of for these was a kind of hemp, not unlike our colonial pite; but finer. The tree which produced it was in their language called, marichi. At noon the women quitted labour and went to join their husbands in their diversion. They immediately took part in the game, ranging themselves twelve upon each side of the party already formed; so that by this addition they amounted in all to forty-eight persons engage at once in the same game, and yet not the smallest confusion was to be seen amongst them. Each remained at his post and left to his neighbour the ball that came most convenient for his stand. The women played with a kind of battle-door, which they wielded with incredible dexterity.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the fishermen arrived with their canoes full of fish. Upon this the party at play immediately broke up; all went to wash themselves in the river, and afterwards retired to their respective homes. The women and children unloaded the boats, and carried the fish before the captain's gates, who distributed them amongst the several families in proportion to the number of their members. Then the village sat down to the only repast which they had made through the day, except some fruits and morsels of earth, of which we shall say more hereafter. After that, they went again and washed themselves; in the interim, night came on; the dance commenced, and was not closed till mid-

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night. The same routine of exercises was repeated every day. At Terra Firma, no other Indian nation is known to have presented the spectacle of a similar republic, more proper to give a lessen of concord and sound morals to certain civilized states, than to receive any from them. The misfortune is that it has lost almost all the purity of its primitive institutions, so that hardly a trace remains of them.

Indians who eat Earth.

It is observed that the Otomaques are amongst the most voracious of the Indians; it is easy to account for this from their mode of living. They are accused of eating earth, and the charge is founded on fact; but according to their primitive system of administration, it appears that that strange habit it retained more from taste than necessity. It is true, according to father Gumilla, that it is a particular kind of earth kneaded and mixed with alligator or other fat, and which afterwards undergoes some sort of cooking, which prevents it from being hurtful to the body. He neglected to tell that the fat is only mixed with the earth which is prepared for the chief. All the vagrant tribes who are found on the borders of Meta likewise eat earth. There are some on the banks of the Casiquiare who even make ants their principal nourishment.

Food of the Indians.

Next to the Otomaques the Guaraunos, who inhabit the islands which are formed by the mouth of

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the Oronoko, enjoy the most comfortable subsistence.

Their position insures them as much fish as they please. They have besides a kind of palm they call murichi, which abundantly furnishes bread, wine, &c. &c. but, in general, the subsistence of the wild Indians is neither abundant nor at all seasons equal.

The chase is subject to casualties and fishing is not less so; besides, they both depend on the weather, and the fruits have likewise their season; to all this, let the improvident spirit of the Indians be added, and we shall see that they would frequently be under the necessity of prolonging their sleep, for want of victuals to eat, unless providence had provided them with such resources, as are indispensable for a people who hate labour.

Turtle Fishery.

Every year, on the fall of the waters of the Oronoko, which begins in the month of February, millions of turtles deposit their eggs among the sands on the beach of the river, and wait till they are hatched, and the young ones far enough advanced not to require their assistance; at this period all the Indians, in the neighbourhood of the Oronoko, repair with their families to its borders, in order to catch turtles which they preserve by drying them at the fire. They use the same precaution with the eggs, excepting that part of them from which they extract oil no wise inferior to sweet oil of the first quality. All these articles, besides a sufficient stock of provision, afford a surplus to be employed in barter with Indians at a

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distance from the Oronoko, whom laziness or fear prevents from coming abroad.

Marriages of the Indians.

Marriage, an institution coeval with the world, is found established among the Indians. With them, however, it has no connection with religion; as there is nothing implied in it which bears any relation to the divinity; nay, polygamy profanes the sanctity which naturally belongs to it, and diminishes the felicity which it is calculated to confer. There is no law amongst them to prohibit marriage between near relations, and yet there appears no instance of incestuous union sanctioned by the name of marriage.

In this transaction the father has no controul over the will of his son; but he exercises an absolute controul over that of his daughter. She must always blindly give her hand to the spouse, or rather the master whom her father destines for her. Instead of giving a dowry with his daughter, he receives one from his new son-in-law who pays it in labour, game, fish, or some other articles. The whole ceremony of marriage consists in dancing and drinking to excess.

Amongst the Indians of Terra-Firma, the relations, neighbours and friends of both parties were invited. The men who attended, carried the wood and straw necessary for building the hut destined for the young couple; the women presented to the bride as much fish, fruit, bread and liquor, as was necessary for the celebration of the marriage; the men sung an Epi-

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thalamium to the bride groom and the women to the bride; they danced and sang till night; and as soon as darkness succeeded the light of day, they presented the bride to the husband, and the ceremony was closed. The piaches had no right with respect to the first wives, who were exclusively legitimate; those whom they afterwards married were only adoptive or supernumerary. Men of distinction amongst them were delicate with regard to their first alliance. To be worthy the hand of a chief, the wife must be descended of a family distinguished by the military exploits, or other remarkable actions, of some of her ancestors.

Upon the borders of the Oronoko, these sorts of ceremonies are nearly the same. The only difference is in the kind of Epithalamia which some old dames sing to the young brides. Ah! my daughter, says one of them, what torment thou preparest for thyself! Hadst thou foreseen them, thou wouldst not have married. Ah! says another, couldst thou have believed, that in the conjugal state, thou wouldst pass a single moment without shedding tears of blood? The pains of childbed, says a third, are nothing compared to those with which thy husband shall afflict thee; he shall be thy tyrant and thou shalt be his victim.

Deplorable Situation of the Women of Oronoko.

These predictions are but too well fulfilled; for besides what the women have to suffer amongst the

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savages in general, those of the Oronoko experience a treatment elsewhere unparalleled. The day of her nuptials is the last that a female of Oronoko has not to lament the unhappy lot of her sex. All domestic labours without exception form her task. The toil of culture and harvest must be performed by her hands. Neither the embarrasments of pregnancy, nor the duty of suckling her children, exempt her from any part of the painful toils which are imposed by the matrimonial state. She stands exposed to the heat of a scorching sun, to the torrents which rush from the sky, and she mingles her blood with her sweat, whilst her barbarous husband, supinely reclining in his hammock, smokes his segar, and copiously regales himself with spirituous liquors, without addressing a single word to his companion exhausted with fatigue. What do I say? this unfortunate creature is not only excluded from partaking of the repast which she has herself prepared, but standing silently by him, she waits till her oppressor has finished his meal, in order to feed on the fragments. What an infamous abuse of the right of the stronger! European women, and particularly you, women of France, caressed in your infancy, adored in your youth, and respected in your old age, accustomed to be the life and object of pleasure, to distribute chains which the greatest heroes are proud to carry, to extend your protection to men, instead of being obliged to court theirs, be grateful to the progress of civilization, for the vast difference between your state and that of the women of Oronoko.

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The Otomaques are the only Indians who allow their women to join in their public diversions, but, notwithstanding they indulge them at intervals in this particular, yet, with respect to domestic drudgery, they place them upon the same footing with the rest of their country women.

Polygamy.

They are likewise the only Indians who have not admitted of polygamy. Among them every husband is confined to one wife; and what is extraordinary, young men are always married to old women, and old men to young girls; for houshold affairs, in their opinion, are better managed, when the inexperience of youth is put under the direction of the prudence of old age.

All the other Indians take as many wives at they think proper, and their number does not in the smallest degree tend to mitigate the misery and oppression of their abject situation; it seems to be the whole object of their lives to support their common husband in idleness and drunkenness. The chiefs have most wives; and amongst some nations they are the only persons who have more than one.

Divorce.

It would not be expected that men who entertain the most sovereign contempt for women should attach much value to their fidelity, for, according to a maxim commonly received on the subject of love,

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jealousy is an indication of ardent attachment. Yet, by a fatality inseparable from the lot of the Indian women, the same man who discovers no charm in their persons, punishes them for being able for a moment to engage the partiality of another. Amongst the Caribbees, both delinquents are publicly put to death by the people; but amongst the greater part of other nations, the offended husband retaliates on the wife of the offender, and the revenge falls nothing short of the offence.

Exchange of Women.

There are some nations to be seen where husbands exchange wives with one another for a limited time, at the expiration of which time they take them back again without the smallest difficulty arising between the contracting parties.

Education of Children.

The manners of the Indians sufficiently indicate what sort of education fathers bestow upon their children; it is sufficient to have seen what bad husbands they are, to be able to judge what bad fathers they must prove. From the tenderness which they manifest for their children in their earlier days, one would think they were no strangers to parental affection, and were sensible of the duties imposed by the paternal character; but these demonstrations have no other motive than fear lest their offspring should die in childhood. As soon as

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they are strong enough to procure for themselves the means of subsistence, all that they have further to expect from the father is an example of laziness, drunkenness, falshood and treachery. The male children commonly leave their father's house at the age of twelve, and do not return to it till they are eighteen.

Hatred of Sons against their Fathers.

There exists not in the world a more unnatural son than an Indian. Far from loving and respecting the author of his birth, he entertains a mortal hatred against him; he frequently waits with impatience for such an increase of his own strength, and diminution of his father's, as will enable him to lift up his criminal hand against him; and such atrocities are allowed to pass with impunity.

We cannot but admire divine justice, when we observe that this hatred of the children is never directed against the mother; witnesses of her sufferings, and companions of her unhappy life, till they attain the age of manhood, they cherish sentiments of pity towards her, which time matures into tenderness.

Dress.

No costume appears so beautiful to an Indian as to have his whole body painted with red. Oil and rocou are the ingredients which compose the paint, and every one applies it either with his own hand, or

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by that of another. Children upon the breast undergo the same operation twice every day. No Indian thinks himself naked when he is painted. It would require a long time to persuade him, that it is more decent to dress than to paint himself. When strangers of the Indian race come to a family, hospitality requires that the women should wash away the paint that is sullied by the dirt or dust, and give them a fresh varnish.

On festival days, their painting presents designs of different colours. To this decoration the men add feathers for the head, and bits of gold and silver suspended from the ears and nose. There are some nations, such as the Guaraunos of the mouth of the Oronoko, who carry pride so far as to heighten this magnificent costume, by a cotton apron of six inches square; yet this piece of coquetry is only permitted to females.

Such were the men with whom the Spaniards were obliged to dispute the conquest of Terra Firma, and such are, at the present day, those who have preserved their independence, in spite of the arms of the conqueror, and the pacific morality of the missionaries.

Indians not reduced.

In the captain-generalship of Caraccas, there remain a few Indians to be reduced. The greatest number is in the south-west part of Guiana, above the Falls of Atures. The zeal of the Franciscan mission of Cumana is totally baffled by the aversion

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which these Indians have for the civil life. If they allow themselves to be approached, it is in order the more effectually to deceive; if they pretend to listen to the missionaries, it is in order to obtain the presents which are always the price of entrance into the social life, but as soon as the generosity of the Franciscan ceases, they carry away whatever they have received, and never appear again. Deserts, lakes, rivers and mountains present to the missionaries obstacles which it is not in their power to surmount. Every thing announces, that a great part of that immense space which lies betwen the sources of the Oronoko and the Amazon, will for a long time, if not for ever, be inaccessible to the Europeans; but although the Indians remain peaceable possessors of it, there is nothing to be apprehended either from their ambition or audacity. Far from meditating to make encroachments on the territory of others, they think themselves sufficiently happy in being able to preserve their own, which nothing secures but its vast extent and its very difficult access. The nation of the Guaraunos, who occupy, as we have seen, the numerous islands which are formed by the mouths of the Oronoko, is one of those who never received the Spanish laws, nor the blessings of Christianity. Situated between the civilized part of Guiana, and the province of Cumana, they stand independent within the Spanish government, and atheists in the midst of christians. This phenomenon is owing to their soil, which during six weeks is covered with water, by the rise of the Oronoko, and during the other six weeks is overflowed twice a day by the

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tide. Vast swarms of various insects, forming a cloud which continually covers all these islands, render them uninhabitable to all except the natives. Besides, as these Indians never commit depredations on the soil where law and religion are established, the government did not think it expedient to undertake any military expedition against the Guaraunos. From a similar policy, they have for upwards of one hundred and fifty years abstained from hostilities with respect to all Indians, excepting such as by their misdemeanours and rebellion incurred the chastisement required by public order, and rendered indispensable for the security of the Spanish sovereignty.

The Guaraunos amount to the number of eight thousand, and, next to the Otomaques, are the gayest of the Indian nations. They frequent the civilized villages which lie to the north and south of the Oronoko in order to sell fish, which they have always in abundance, and hammocks which they manufacture. The missionaries avail themselves of these opportunities to catechise them; but, if we are to judge from the little success of their efforts for more than a century, these Indians persist in the savage life more from a decided preference, than ignorance of the advantages which are promised by civilization. It is true, that in a political view, their independence is of little importance to public order, as it experiences no interruption from the use which they make of it.

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Goahiros.

The case is different with respect to the Goahiros, a nation situated between the jurisdiction of Maracaïbo and the Rio, or River de la Hache. They occupy the coast for more than thirty leagues, and extend equally far into the interior part of the country. They have at all times been considered as the most ferocious of the maritime Indians. The Spaniards never even attempted to conquer them. When the missionary system was adopted, some Capuchin Friars were sent there from the kingdom of Valencia, who, after much time and persevering labour, succeeded in teaching them some christian truths, as well as some submission to the Spanish authority. They prevailed upon them to swear allegiance to the king, which amounted to no more than an acknowledgment of his right to nominate their cacique, who commanded in the king's name. They likewise submitted to some religious practices, and gave hopes of becoming good christians and citizens, when an event unexpectedly took place in 1766, that irrecoverably threw them back to that barbarism, from which they had hardly ever emerged.

A missionary being informed, that an Indian of a neighbouring village was in the habit of coming to pass the night with a female Indian in his vicinity, ordered him to be taken and whipped. His orders were unfortunately but too faithfully executed. The Indian, all covered with blood, retired to his people,

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loudly demanding vengeance for the injury he had sustained.

He had but to show himself, to make his case be taken up as a common cause. The Indians immediately flew to arms and fell upon the village where the chastisement had been inflicted. All the inhabitants they massacred without distinction, and ravaged or reduced to ashes whatever was exposed to their destructive fury. Although the insurrection was principally against the missionaries, yet they had the good fortune to make their escape. The revolt became universal over the territory of that nation. They swore they would resume their former habits of life, which they had abandoned with regret; and their conduct since evinces that they are determined not to violate their oath.

Since that fatal period, no missionary has been so fool-hardy as to expose himself to inevitable death, by attempting with persuasive art to regain an ascendant over men whose hearts are impenetrably steeled against all moral impressions.

Their number amounts to thirty thousand. They are governed by a cacique, for whom they have erected a citadel upon a small eminence, called la Teta, (the Pap) at the distance of some leagues from the sea. They breed horses upon which they ride with incredible rapidity. Their troops are all mounted, each soldier carrying a carabine, cartridge-box, bow and quiver. They experience a great deal of friendship from the English of Jamaica, who assist them with advice, and supply them with arms. We are assured by the Spaniards that this intercourse

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is maintained upon so intimate a footing that the Goahiros send their children to Jamaica in order to learn to speak the English language, to handle their arms and direct the artillery. This strange policy of the English can have no other object than that of securing allies, in case of an expedition against Terra Firma.

If along with these means the Goahiros had more tactical knowledge, more discipline and courage, the tranquillity of the Spanish settlements which have the misfortune to be near them, would be frequently disturbed, or, to speak more to the purpose, the possession of them would have been long ago abandoned; but having as yet neither ambition, nor means to effect any conquest, they are satisfied with making such occasional inroads as have no other object than to carry off some horses and cattle, to gratify their revenge by ravaging with impunity a defenceless country, or their rapaciousness by forcing the inhabitants to capitulate upon such terms as they choose to dictate. They have rarely any communication with Maracaibo, because, as its jurisdiction is the principal scene of their robberies and atrocities, the inhabitants are obliged to be continually upon their guard, so as to be always ready to repel the aggressions of such troublesome neighbours.

Their Intercourse with Rio-de-la-Hache.

The Spanish city which the Indians chiefly frequent is Rio-de-la-Hache, which depends upon the viceroyalty of Santa Fe. To this city they resort in order to barter their commodities. They set out

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in bands, most commonly preceded by their wives, who carry their children upon their backs, besides other loads, too heavy even for beasts of burthen. Notwithstanding they are in the habit of this traffic, so great is their distrust, that they have never adopted the use of specie, for fear of imposition. Their transactions are all in the way of barter; what they exchange are, generally, horses and oxen, and it is rare that they take any thing in return but spirituous liquors, of which they are passionately fond. When their necessities are pressing, they have recourse to arms, and threaten the nearest city or village. After some hostilities have been committed, the Spaniards sue for peace, which is readily granted, provided some pipes of brandy, together with some other articles of little importance, cement the conditions.

At Rio-de-la-Hache, treaties of this kind more frequently occur than any where else, and the presents by which they are purchased are attended with some abuses. In fact, they only tend to encourage the Indians to assume a hostile attitude without any real grounds of offence, and by the facility with which the persons charged with the negotiation can exaggerate the amount of what has been advanced for pacification, they procure themselves emoluments which must render such events more to be desired than apprehended.

These Indians are always well received in all the Spanish cities to which they resort from motives of business or curiosity; but they are so regardless of the laws of reciprocity, as to receive no Spaniard into

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their country. Whoever would take the liberty of intruding upon them, would pay for his imprudence by the loss of his life. It is, nevertheless, a matter of fact, that Spanish smugglers, on paying a certain consideration, obtain a passport and escort to traverse the country of the Goahiros, and that from this spirit of accommodation their independence has acquired many partizans amongst the Spaniards themselves. Their principal and most useful connection is formed with the English of Jamaica. By them, as I have already stated, they are supplied with the arms and ammunition which they require, and the stuffs with which they are clothed; for while they remained under the Spanish dominion, they contracted the habit of wearing clothes, which they still retain.

The women use a kind of robe which reaches a little below the knee, and fashioned so as to leave the right arm bare. The men wear a very short shirt, breeches which cover one half of the thigh, and a small cloak tucked up to the shoulder. This dress is set off on both sexes by a great variety of feathers, bits of shining metals, and gold ridiculously fixed to their ears, noses, and arms. The articles which they furnish to the English in exchange for the merchandise they carry to them, are pearls, which they fish in their own ports, and horses, mules, and oxen.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, and what by a single stroke of the pencil expresses the ferocity and perfidy of the Goahiros, that the English, who frequent their ports as intimate friends, rarely venture to go on shore, from a well grounded fear of

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being assassinated by them. The business of bartering is transacted on board, and the ships remain there as short a time as possible.

The ships which are cast upon the coast by the accidents of the sea, immediately become the prey of these cannibals; they begin with massacreing the crew, and devouring their flesh; the cargo is divided amongst those who are present on the occasion.

On the eastern part of the territory of the Goahiros are the Cocinas Indians, who live like savages, but are so cowardly and pusillanimous as to allow the Goahiros to exercise an authority, which the bold always acquire over the timid. These savages are, in fact, nothing but the vassals of other savages.

The sketch which we have given of the character of these Indians is undoubtedly more than is necessary to prove that the existence of such a people presents innumerable evils, and not a single advantage. Policy, humanity, and religion at once remonstrate against the criminal use which these savages make of their independence. The object here is not to subdue a people who know how to enjoy their liberty without abusing it; it is to compel men to act like men; to make them renounce practices which rank them with ferocious beasts; to impress them with a sense of the dignity of their species; and imperiously to call them in spite of their reluctance to partake of the blessings of social life.

It is of importance to the peace and security of the adjacent countries, to the facility of interior in-

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tercourse, to the freedom of navigation on the coast, to the honour and stability of the Spanish authority, that the soil, occupied by these lawless banditti, should at length be reduced under the power of the law. As long as Terra Firma shall harbour in its bosom this band of atrocious offenders, equally disposed wickedly to co-operate with the disturbers of tranquillity at home, and to favour the designs of enemies abroad, it will always be exposed to immediate danger and continual alarm.

I know that the government of Terra Firma entertains no doubt with respect to the necessity of reducing the Goahiros Indians; I know that D. Fernando Miyares Gonzales, the present governor of Maracaibo, a man who is both able and willing to promote the public good, wages incessant war against these savages, in order to prevent by arms the excesses to which they would proceed, if they were not kept in check. In 1801, there were confined in the prison of Maracaibo forty-nine Goahiros Indians, who were detained as hostages; amongst whom was a female cousin of the cacique, in whose release the nation took a very lively interest. The Spanish government offered to restore her, provided they would surrender one Martin Roderique, a mulatto of Rio-de-la-Hache, whose enterprising and malignant spirit occasioned serious mischief to the province by the counsels which he gave the Goahiros; but the exchange did not correspond with the views of the Indians; and in 1803, the prisoner was still in custody of the Spaniards. This governor has done every thing that a man could do, in order to

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prevent these Indians from continuing to be a scourge to the neighbouring countries, and compel them to submit to the Spanish authority. His different representations have been dispatched to the viceroy of Santa Fe, whose concurrence is necessary to make an attack on the west side, in concert with that which would be made on the side of Maracaïbo. The viceroy, who resides at the distance of two hundred leagues, could not give any orders without consulting the governor of Rio-de-la-Hache, who has been always dilatory and indecisive, and sometimes avowedly opposed to the measure. The Goahiros, according to those who contend against reducing them, are a formidable nation, well mounted, armed, and disciplined, and can bring into the field forty thousand effective men. Their only ambition, at present, is to secure a commercial communication, through which, by means of barter, they may command the necessary supplies of liquor and clothing. If they have recourse to military operations, it is easy, by a seasonable treaty, to terminate hostilities. But if they are attacked, barely with the forces which the neighbouring provinces can march against them, there is reason to fear that their ambition may be roused, and that instead of repelling invasion, they may conceive the idea of achieving conquests, so that the fate of the neighbouring provinces will be inevitably, to become a prey to their robbery and ferocity. These reasons, more plausible than just, and founded more on sordid views than disinterested integrity, have frustrated all the efforts of the governor of Maracaïbo, who beholds with indigna-

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tion, a handful of barbarians, in the heart of a civilized nation, commit excesses of every kind with the certainty of impunity.

At all events, the epoch cannot be far distant, when the Spaniards will invade the territory of the Goahiros, if they wish to prevent their own from being invaded.

Civilized Indians.

From the Indians who still lead a savage life historical order leads us to those who are under the government of law. We have seen that the system of rigour which was adopted by the first conquerors was speedily succeeded by a system of lenity and kindness; and instead of dooming the unfortunate inhabitants of America to slavery and death, the kings of Spain ordained, that government should protect them in the enjoyment of their rights and personal liberty. They wished to place them on the footing of vassals, not of slaves, of subjects, not of victims. The policy of the Spanish government was only to reduce their independence, and although its right to accomplish that object was as problematical as that of enslaving them, yet when divested of all coercive means, it became more tolerable than it was when, under the impulse of rapacity and revenge, acts of cruelty and atrocity were committed the most shocking that ever afflicted humanity.

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Excessive Lenity of the Laws in their Favour.

Few foreign writers have rendered to the Spanish government the justice which is due to it, with respect to its treatment of the Indians. The Abbe Raynal, an ardent and profound author, too enthusiastic to be impartial, too vehement to be correct, presents, with respect to the present state of the Indians, an idea which is not applicable to any of the Spanish possessions, still less to the captain-generalship of Caraccas. Robertson, likewise a philosopher, but more respectable as an historian, has made a nearer approach to truth, without being sufficiently explicit in the declaration of it; for the Spanish laws are still more favourable to the Indians than he represents.

The Spanish legislator has studied to give that class of men all the advantages which were deemed compatible with their dependence on the mother country.

It may even be said, that their disposition to favour them has rendered them as useless to society, as society itself appears useless to them.

If laws ought to be adapted to the manners of the people for whom they are intended; if they are good only in proportion as they tend to repress vice, correct errors and create virtues; the code which regulates the Indians is very far from fulfilling its object. One of the primary obligations which ought to have been imposed on beings whose distinguishing character is idleness, was that of industry. The

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magistrate ought to have been satisfied at first with pointing out the nature of that industry, and to have allowed the result to turn out entirely in favour of the Indian. By that mode of proceeding, society would have speedily acquired an industrious citizen, and the king an useful vassal. But they thought, or pretended to think, that to lay any restraint upon the inclination of the Indian, was to aim a blow at his liberty. The manner of employing his time they left to his own discretion, and he preferred leading an idle life, immersed in those vices with which such a life is commonly attended. This subject shall be resumed in another place.

Measures to keep them in Dependence.

With the exception of some trifling precautions that Spain has taken to frustrate the efforts which it was unreasonably supposed the Indians might make to recover their ancient independence, an object beyond their faculty of thinking, they were left without controul to indulge all their propensities, inclinations and vices.

The principal regulations of the mother-country, in order to insure her sovereignty in America were to prohibit the Indians to carry any kind of arms offensive or defensive; to debar them from the use of horses; to prevent any Indian from learning the trade of armorer, or dwelling in the house of any person where he might acquire any notion of the manufacturing, repairing or handling of arms; to oblige the conquered Indians to live together in villages, instead

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of being scattered over the country: to forbid every Indian to pass from one village to another, much less to transfer his residence, under the penalty of twenty lashes to be inflicted upon the delinquent, and four milled dollars to be levied upon the cacique who should permit it; to debar Spaniards, mulattoes, and those of a mixed breed, from inhabiting Indian villages, for fear of diffusing ideas injurious to public tranquillity.

All these measures, perfectly useless in the provinces of Caraccas, have long been consigned to the number of those regulations devised by speculative geniuses, who think themselves inspired with wisdom when they are only under the influence of imaginary fears. The disposition relative to the separation of Spaniards from Indians is the only one which is yet in force, less because experience has demonstrated its utility, than for motives which shall be explained in chapter VI. under the article of missionaries.

Their Privileges.

Whilst we view what Spain has done in favour of the Indians, let impartiality decide, if there ever has been, in any state, a class of men loaded with more important privileges.

A conquered people never could pretend to enjoy any other political benefits, than those resulting from the laws of the power that conquered them; most commonly, indeed, they are excluded from enjoying any, or otherwise subjected to so many exceptions calculated to retain them in a state of dependence, that their code becomes entirely different from that of the conqueror.

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Thus Spain would have appeared to the eyes of the world as acting generously, by giving her own laws to the Indians. What title, then, has she acquired to the admiration of mankind for the care she has taken to modify her laws with the intention of rendering her new vassals happier than her own subjects! had such a blessing redounded to a people who knew how to appreciate and improve it to advantage, the conquest of America would have proved to the natives a truly happy revolution, excepting, however, the first age of the effusion of Indian blood, the recollection of which continually embitters the advantages which result from civil and religious institutions in a country formerly overrun with barbarians who had nothing but their figure to identify their species.

The first act of generosity of the Spanish government towards the Indians was, their allowing them magistrates of their own class and choice. All the Indian villages, under the Spanish dominion, have a cacique descended from ancestors who held that distinction before the conquest, if any such exist; if not, he is nominated by the king. One of the qualifications indispensable in order to be invested with this dignity, is to be an Indian without any mixture of European or African blood.

The legislator, presuming that the caciques would exercise their authority only to promote the happiness of their fellow-men, has not been at first particularly exact in defining or circumscribing its nature and extent, but as soon as it was observed that they shamefully abused the trust reposed in them, no time was lost in securing the Indians from

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the injustice they experienced from their chiefs. I do not think it necessary to describe the powers which were exercised by the caciques, because these appointments are scarcely to be met with but in Mexico under the name of Tecles, and in Peru under that of Curacas.

In the provinces dependent on Caraccas, every Indian village containing more than forty houses is put under the authority of a cabildo, or municipality, composed of two Indian alcades and regidors.

The whole police of the village forms the jurisdiction of the cabildo. The principal care recommended to it by law, is to repress drunkenness, impiety, and every kind of licentiousness; but such is the corruption which generally prevails among that class of men, that the Indian magistrates charged with the suppression of vice and immorality, are themselves so deeply tinctured with them, as to contribute more to propagate, than suppress them. Hence it frequently happens, that they punish instances of intemperance in others, which are by no means so striking as those which they exhibit in their own conduct. And God knows what proportion they fix, in cases of that kind, between the punishment and the crime!

To remedy this abuse, the Spanish government has placed between the Indian magistrates and those who are amenable to their tribunals, an officer who bears, in Terra Firma, the name of corregidor, and in the rest of Spanish America, protector of the Indians. This office always devolves upon a Spa-

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niard who is bound to reside amongst the Indians in the same village where he exercises his functions. He is stationed there in order to prevent the Indian magistrates from abusing their authority, and from inflicting excessive punishments. He is empowered to mitigate all those which appear to him to have been dictated by the vengeance, enmity, drunkenness or inhumanity of the judge. This single fact proves that the Indian possesses a spirit so abject, ideas so base, that he is more inclined to aggravate the yoke by which he and his countrymen are oppressed, than to alleviate or shake it off; and what is still more remarkable, is, that the conqueror himself is obliged to restrain the arm of the Indian magistrate from striking, with indiscriminate vengeance, these miserable creatures, who hold the same rank among the human species, as the ai, and the unau, do among the quadrupeds. To conclude all that I have to say with respect to the functions of the corregidor, let me add, that he is likewise charged with the collection of the poll-tax, which is exacted from the Indians under the name of tribute, and further that he lends his hand to the execution of the laws.

There are but few Indian villages in the captain-generalship of Caraccas which can pay the salary of a corregidor, for which reason they are under the necessity of assigning to one person a district of three or four villages, between which he must divide his care and superintendance.

The missionaries, in those villages which are still committed to their charge, perform the functions of corregidors, for the benefit of the community; for

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the tribute is only levied in those which are subjected to the ordinary police.

The Indian is allowed to retain possession of the land that belongs to him, when he submits to the Spanish authority; if he has none of his own, they allot to him what is sufficient for his exigencies, provided he engages to work it.

All the laws ordain that offences committed by Indians be more severely punished, than if they were committed by Spaniards.

The procurators-general of the audiences are, *ex officio*, the protectors of the Indians, and their defenders in civil as well as in criminal prosecutions.

The caciques and their descendants enjoy all the privileges of the Spanish nation.

The Indians are exempted from the duty of the Alcavala, with respect to every thing they sell on their own account. To form a just idea of the importance of this exemption, it is sufficient to see the article Alcavala in chapter IX.

An annual tribute is exacted from the Indians who are no longer under the management of the missionaries, but is levied on males alone, from the age of eighteen to fifty. Its proportion is not the same in all the Spanish settlements, but in Terra Firma it amounts to about two milled dollars. We shall see how it is appropriated in chapter IX. The lightest inconvenience, the smallest inclemency of the weather, the most frivolous pretext is sufficient with the greatest part of the corregidors to obtain a dispensation from the payment of it. Nevertheless, it frequently happens, on the approach

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of the term for collecting this tax, which is certainly not a great one in a country so fertile as Terra Firma, that some of those upon whom it is to be levied take flight and seek an asylum amongst the wild Indians.

One of the most advantageous privileges of the Indians is that of being considered as minors in all their civil transactions. It is left to their discretion to execute or not to execute whatever contracts they make with the Spaniards without the interposition of the Judges. They can insist on cancelling them in every stage of any business. Their fixed property cannot be legally purchased but at a judiciary auction or sheriff's sales. If the article to be sold is of little value, the permission of the judge is sufficient; but that is not granted till it appears by the most satisfactory vouchers, that the bargain is advantageous to the Indian.

It was doubtless impossible for the law to carry its impartiality further. Before we examine the results, we must see what the church has done, on her part, in order to rank the Indians amongst the number of the faithful.

Distinguished Favours which the Church grants them.

The inquisition which possesses an absolute right over the consciences of all Spaniards, possesses none over those of the Indians. Their crimes of heresy and apostacy are amenable to their episcopal tribunals; and their sorceries to the secular tribunals; but these

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iabilities are mere formalities, for there never has been an instance of a legal prosecution carried on against an Indian for such crimes.

According to the council of Lima, ecclesiastic censures can in no case be inflicted on an Indian. His ignorance is a sufficient apology for all such religious offences as he may be guilty of.

All the instruction, necessary to admit Indian adults to the ordinance of baptism, amounts only to their being brought to assent, by signs or words, that idolatry, superstition and falsehood are mortal sins; that fornication, adultery, incest, and uncleanness, are horrible sins; and that drunkenness, which destroys reason, is also a sin.

The general custom is to cut off the hair of the adult who is going to receive baptism. The first missionaries observed with respect to the Indians, who are particularly fond of their hair, that rather than lose it, they preferred the gates of heaven to be shut against them. The king, informed of this obstacle to the conversion of the Indians, issued an edict, on the 5th of March, 1581, by which, contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul, he dispensed with cutting their hair.

It is so difficult to impress an Indian with the utility of confession, that he carries to the tribunal of penitence neither the necessary contrition nor attrition; he approaches with the intention of neither declaring his sin, nor reforming his conduct. If we were to adopt the opinion of Soto, that the duty of the confessor *non est interrogare pœnitentem, sed audire confitentem*, the confession of the Indian

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would be of very little avail. Instead of the solemnity of deportment usual on such an occasion, there arise between the minister of the church and the Indian who confesses, debates which are sometimes extremely ludicrous. It is rare that the Indian can be prevailed upon to put himself in the attitude of a penitent. When in the beginning of the ceremony he is desired to kneel, he immediately squats on the ground; and in this posture, instead of declaring his sins, he stoutly denies every thing which the confessor, knowing his practices, wishes him to confess: he must be absolutely convicted of a falsehood before he will acknowledge himself guilty of any sin; and when reduced to this last extremity, he frequently curses those who have given information to the priest. Such a confession made by a Spaniard, or any other christian whatever, would be nothing, a thousand times worse than nothing; but, if made by an Indian, according to different doctors of divinity, it is valid, provided the confessor extorts from him a demonstration of contrition; and that is done by dictating to him a form of contrition which the Indian mutters indistinctly. His ignorance is so gross, and his faculties so limited, that nothing else can reasonably be expected of him; and according to the theological axiom, *facienti quod est in se, Deus non denegat auxilium,* it is concluded that the Indian has thus well and duly confessed.

By a particular favour of the Pope, the Indians are not strictly bound to conform to the rule of con-

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fessing during easter. It is sufficient, that they confess once a year even *extra tempora paschæ.*

Their confession is allowed to be excellent, although it specifies neither the kind of sin, nor the number of times they have committed it; because they are ranked amongst those who are spoken of by Reginaldo and Euriquez: *Rustici nesciunt discernere species morales aut numerum, sed crasso modo confitentur; hi non sunt cogendi repetere totius vitæ confessiones.*

Divines recommend to impose slight penances on the Indians. They are inclined to think that, if even they should be entirely exempted, that omission would not operate against them as a mortal sin: for it is sufficiently excusable, says the Monk John Baptist, on account of the weakness of their memory, their carelessness, and lack of understanding.

The church recognizes so little capacity in the Indians, as to suppose it impossible to make them comprehend, that the god-father contracts a degree of spiritual relationship with the god-son and his mother; and upon account of this ignorance, it has been decided that they contract none. *Nemo enim obligatur ad id quod omnino ignorat.*

It is in the power of the bishops to grant to the Indians a full dispensation with regard to that kind of relationship, without being able to extend any to the Spaniards; for it is exclusively in favour of the Indians.

The Indians are obliged to hear mass only on Sundays, Christmas, and New-Year's day, Ascension and Corpus Christi day, on the festivals of the Virgin, viz. the Nativity, the Purification and the As-

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sumption; and finally on St. Peter's day. That is not one half of the days on which Spaniards must hear mass under the penalty of incurring mortal sin. Further, according to bishop Montenegro, the Indians are to be dispensed with, if they live too far distant from church, and are afraid of getting wet upon the way going or coming; if they have any suspicion that the corregidor will make them pay the tribute, or assign them some work; if they are under any apprehension of receiving any correction from the curate; or if they have any reason to be afraid of being made alcades against their will. All these cases have been foreseen and inserted in the itinerary of the Indian curates.

The only days which the Indians are obliged to observe as fast-days are the Fridays of Lent, holy Saturday and Christmas-eve. Without being obliged to take a bull they are at liberty to eat whatever is permitted to those who purchase bulls. In short, so strong has been the persuasion, that the best means of recommending religion to the Indians was to accommodate it to their tastes and habits, that it became a serious question among divines, whether it were lawful to eat human flesh, and what adds to the singularity of the question is, that it has been decided in the affirmative. Montenegro, whom I have just cited, supporting himself with the doctrine of Lesio and Diana, gravely says, in his Itinerario de parochos de Indios, lib. 4. trat. 5. sect. 9, num. 8: That in case of necessity, one may eat human flesh without being guilty of any sin, be-

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cause the thing is not evil in itself. And where does he presume that those cases of urgent necessity can present themselves? In the most fertile part of the globe, covered with forests where game supplies an inexhaustible resource, and watered with rivers abounding in fish, turtle, &c.

Unhappy Results.

From the preceding sketch may be seen how much policy and religion have laboured to make the Indians enjoy all the blessings of civilization, and in order to accomplish that object, how much they have studied to render the transition from the savage to the civil life, easy and gradual. Where is there an example of a people so barbarous as not to be moved by such care and attentions, or whose vesy posterity would give such proofs of stubborn insensibility? The most stupid, as well as most ferocious of animals, discover some sense of gratitude and attachment to those who caress, or carefully feed them.—The Indian is singularly distinguished in nature by an apathy and indifference, which is not to be found in any other being. His heart, shut against pleasure as well as hope, is only accessible to fear. Instead of manly boldness, his character is marked with abject timidity. His soul has no spring, his mind no vivacity. As incapable of conceiving, as of reasoning, he passes his life in a state of torpid insensibility, which shows that he is ignorant of himself and of every thing around him. His ambition and desires never extend beyond his immediate wants.—

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This character, not quite so prominent in the Indians who inhabit cities, is perfectly applicable to those who inhabit villages under the direction of a Spanish curate or corregidor, notwithstanding they are in the fourth or fifth generation of their apprenticeship to the social life.

Difficulty of making them Citizens.

All the efforts of the legislator to inspire them with a desire of improving their natural faculties have proved abortive. Neither the good treatment which they have received on being admitted into society, nor the important privileges with which they have been favoured, have been able to eradicate their partiality for the savage life, although at present only known to them by tradition. There are very few civilized Indians who do not sigh after the solitude of the forest, and embrace the first opportunity of retiring to it. This does not arise from their attachment to liberty, but from their finding the gloomy abode of the forest more congenial with their melancholy, superstition and utter contempt of the most sacred laws of nature. For three ages have they laboured to impress on this miserable race of men some sense of right and wrong, and yet they are altogether regardless of the right of property, when they can violate it with impunity; they will not abstain from continual intoxication, as long as they are supplied with liquor; they will be guilty of incest whenever they have a convenient opportunity; of lying and perjury whenever it answers their purpose; and

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they will never submit to labour, but when compelled by hunger.

The Indians are so much accustomed to the practice of lying, and so little sensible of the sacred obligation of truth, that the Spaniards have thought it proper, in order to prevent the unhappy effects which their testimony might cause to innocent persons, to pass a law by which it is enacted, that not less than six Indians are to be admitted as witnesses in one cause, and the testimony of these six, shall only be equivalent to the sworn evidence of one white person.

Thus we see that the statesman, with all his expedients and resources, has not been able to accomplish his object; let us now see whether the minister of religion, with all the mildness of his morality, has been more successful.

Greater Difficulty of making them Christians.

There is not, perhaps, in the world, a creature more unfit for being trained in the principles of christianity than an Indian. Without capacity to comprehend divine truths, without sensibility to raise his thoughts to heaven, without maturity of reflection sincerely to believe in the existence of an only God, he thinks as little of the future as he does of the present state. He seems to pay attention; nay, even mutters the doctrine which is taught him, with a docility which has all the appearance of submission, whilst it is only the effect of carelessness and indifference. If the idea of an only God be already above his conception, what

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signify to him the mysteries on which the christian religion is founded? They are barriers which he does not think of approaching, much less of surmounting. What will always baffle the most zealous apostle to the Indians, is that they are utterly destitute of faith; and we know that without that gift of God which engages sincerely to acquiesce in the truths which he has revealed to his church, no man can be considered a christian. It is true the Indian never refuses his assent to any article of religious faith, but expresses his approbation of the morality which is preached to him; his incredulity only appears from the disgust which he discovers for religious exercises. As far as these exercises consist of mere show, he is amused with them; the ringing of bells, the singing of psalms, and the sound of musical instruments, which frequently accompany them, the view of illuminations and decorations, all seem to captivate the Indian; but catechisms, sermons, low masses and abstinences, are to him such disgusting objects, as are altogether intolerable. His behaviour at church is by no means a proof that he came there from a spirit of devotion. His clothes are always in a very tattered condition, and are the more offensive to modesty, as they hardly cover his nakedness; nay, he frequently comes to church stark-naked, and lies squat on the ground during the whole time of divine service. He never discovers an inclination to join in prayer; he has more veneration for magic and sorcery, although he hears their absurdity continually exposed, than for religious worship, whose inestimable advan-

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tages are made the theme of incessant recommendation. What is more remarkable, the Indian who believes the christian doctrine passes amongst his companions for a simpleton. Sorcery and conjuration are the only tenets which Indians can relish, or embrace. Old age, instead of recalling them to the true faith, on the contrary, effaces from their memory those slight impressions which they may have received in their youth, in favour of christianity. It is even not uncommon to see old squaws burlesque the very sermons they are hearing, and by this means attempt to destroy in the young Indians the salutary effects they might otherwise produce on their morals. These old squaws, scattered in different parts of the church, make their remarks on every thing that falls from the mouth of the preacher. When he speaks of the goodness and power of God, the old squaw replies in a low, muttering tone: if he be so good and powerful, why does he not provide us food, without obliging us to labour for it? If he describes the torments of hell, the squaw replies: has he been there? who informed him of it? who is come from that quarter? If he expatiates on mortification and abstinence: why, says the squaw, does not the holy father, who preaches to us such fine morality, practise it himself? If he speaks on the subject of confession, the squaw ascribes it to the curiosity of the priest, and contends that God has no need of knowing what the Indians are doing; so that with such commentaries, the sermon is more prejudicial than favourable to the progress of the faith.

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How the Indians ought to be treated.

It is, therefore, clearly demonstrated, that all the Indian villages are still much nearer the savage than the civilized life. Even those cannot be excepted, who have lived under the protection of the laws for more than a hundred and fifty years. The reason may, perhaps, be ascribed to the natural disposition of that class of men, who are so remarkable for their stupidity, that the question has been agitated, whether they were rational beings; and it was not till after serious examination that Paul III. declared in 1537, that they were *Indos ipsos*, as the bull expresses it, *ut pote veros homines, non solum christianæ fidei, capaces existere discernimus et declaramus.* But it is very possible, likewise, that a different mode of treatment would have, in some measure, removed their incapacity. If, instead of encouraging their laziness, or refusing to pay wages to those who would work, they had obliged all, without exception, to labour, on condition of procuring for them commodities as a compensation for their toil; if they had studied to create amongst them artificial wants, so as to make them appreciate these commodities, their civilization would undoubtedly be far more advanced. They have treated them like ferocious animals whom they wished to tame; they ought to have led them like children, whom they wished to form into men. The system of excessive indulgence which was suitable for religion, was not equally suitable for political government. The means to be adopted to qualify a person for the discharge of the social duties are by no means the same with those

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which must be used to make him love and adore his Creator. It is my opinion, and I repeat it, that this part of the population of Terra-Firma would be less immersed in superstition and vice, if one law had been passed to oblige them to labour, and another to render their labour profitable to themselves.

By being trained to a laborious life, men are at the same time trained to become good husbands, good fathers, and good christians; for all the social virtues are the natural attendants of the love of industry.

New Plan for managing the Indians.

The following are, in my opinion, the means which should have been, and may still be adopted, the more effectually to fulfil the views of government.

The first step should be, to abolish all festivals, as they can be of no other service to the Indians, than to give them an opportunity to get drunk. The Sunday should be exclusively and solely devoted to the worship of God and to religious instruction. After six days of labour the seventh will be a real day of rest. Every Indian family should be under an express obligation to raise the quantity and kinds of provisions, which the magistrate who has the superintendance and direction of their labour shall have prescribed. The quantity of provisions shall be in proportion to the presumed exigencies of the family; and the plantations for provisions shall be as near as possible to the houses of the proprietors, so as to be easily secured against the robbery of men and the

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voracity of animals: on these small patches of ground they shall be employed two days in the week, which will be abundantly sufficient for their cultivation.

The Indians of each village should be formed into four divisions; and to each of these should be assigned an extent of ground, proper for the culture of colonial produce. One plantation should be for coffee, another for cotton, another for indigo, and a fourth for cocoa, supposing the land in every village to be adapted for such a diversity of productions; for it is of no consequence, according to my plan, whether the kind of productions raised on the four plantations be different or not.

The members of each division, should be obliged to repair every day, except those employed in private culture, to the plantation appropriated to them, and to work on it from sun-rise to sun-set, excepting the hours of meals and during rainy weather.

In the centre of each of these plantations, should be erected the buildings necessary for their accommodation, the expenses of which should be advanced by the king, to be refunded to him in annual payments of a fourth part during the first four years of its culture. All the produce carefully laid up in a store-house should, if possible, be sold on the spot; if not, it should be consigned to a commercial house of the nearest sea-port, in order to be disposed of; and its proceeds be remitted to the village whence the produce was sent, in order to be divided in specie amongst the Indians who raised it. It should be exempt from the duty of the alcavala and tithes for

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at least ten years. It is to be understood that the expenses of cultivation, transportation, commission, and other small charges, are to be deducted before a dividend is made.

The Indian should have the free and entire disposal of the money which he received as his quota; such an indulgence would be calculated to rouse ambition, if he possessed any, if not, to inspire it. The establishment of all kinds of shops and trades should be permitted in the village, so that the Indian might have an opportunity of laying out his money on such objects as he might deem useful and convenient.

If four large plantations for each village should not be sufficient, there is nothing to prevent their number from being augmented, or reduced, as circumstances might require. In like manner, ten, twenty or thirty Indians, who would wish to work together, might be allowed, without any inconvenience, to form a separate plantation; but on condition of cultivating a space in proportion to their number. The two objects to be accomplished would be, to excite the Indians to industry, and to procure more objects for commerce.

The common establishments should be under the direction of persons well acquainted with culture and the art of preparing the produce for market; under them the Indians would serve their apprenticeship, at the same time that they would procure for themselves the means of a comfortable subsistence.

This kind of guardianship ought to last for ten years, after which, the cultivated lands should be so divided, that every family might retain its little pri-possession.

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The chief magistrate of each village should superintend private culture; he should carefully ascertain the quantity of provisions necessary for the support of the cultivators, and the extent of ground, which over and above they might be able to lay out in the cultivation of coffee and cotton.

Results of this Regulation.

I forbear enlarging on this plan, because to me it appears so simple as to require no further explanation. Its general object is, to derive advantage from the labour of the Indians, without encroaching on their personal liberty; to attach them to property, without making them rich; to keep them at a distance from towns, without depriving them of the enjoyments of society; to make them refrain from drunkenness, without debarring them from innocent pleasures; to instruct them in the principles of christianity, without corrupting them with superstition; to give them a taste for decent attire, without allowing them to be tainted with luxury; in short, to give them a soul, ideas, morals, and a comfortable subsistence; all which must arise from labour.

If better means can be devised than what I propose, let them be adopted; I shall sincerely pray for their success. In whatever manner that wretched people can be rescued from the brutal, degraded and abject state, in which they at present exist, it ought to give equal satisfaction to every feeling heart.

At any rate, I trust that this scheme will not be considered as one of those productions, of the closet, which contains a visionary theory that can never be

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reduced to practice. All that is necessary to accomplish my plan, are talents, perseverance and probity, on the part of those who shall be charged with its execution. Besides, trials may be made on a small scale, in order to run less risk, and, by means of these first experiments, to rectify whatever may appear unfavourable to the execution of the general plan.

The Indian population in the captain-generalship of Caraccas, amounts to seventy thousand eight hundred souls. By engaging them in easy culture, such as that of coffee and cotton, in which women, children and old men, can be equally employed, there would result so considerable an augmentation of commodities as would contribute very sensibly to the increase of commerce.

Of seventy-two thousand eight hundred Indians, I suppose that only one half are employed in labour; and that, instead of one thousand pounds of coffee, for example, which every individual should contribute annually to commerce, he furnishes no more than five hundred; this is always an addition of eighteen millions two hundred and fifty pounds of coffee to the present exports, the proceeds of which will serve to purchase articles of European manufactures. From these new articles of merchandize, will result a new activity to navigation and commerce, and from that activity will result advantages so palpable, that it is unnecessary to describe them.

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CHAPTER V.

CIVIL AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION.

Origin of Conquest—Sovereignty of Spain established in America—Examination of the Spanish regime—Council of the Indies—Its privileges—Representative of the king—His powers—His duties—His privileges and the duration of his office—Succession of the government—Account rendered by the representative of the king at the expiration of his office—Royal audience—Its establishment at Caraccas—How composed—Its costume—Its sittings—Measures to expedite the proceedings of the audiences—Consideration in which the audiences are held—Duties imposed on their members—Prerogative of the audiences—Cabildos—Their establishment in Spain—Similar in America—Their excessive power—Usurpation—Restraint—Their composition—Elections—Their privileges—Lieutenants of justice—Other tribunals—Military *Fuero*—Complication of judiciary forms Facility of exceptions—Reflections on the Spanish Laws—Armed force—Defence of Sea-ports—Debarkation on the coasts—Organization of the armed force—Troops of the line—How composed and paid—Militia.

Origin of Conquest.

THE history of every country proves that in all ages conquest has been the mania of mankind. Inconvenience of situation, barrenness of soil, the desire of a better climate, have been the primary motives. These were soon succeeded by ambition, jealousy, hatred; and what was at first necessity was not slow in becoming passion.

The boundary which separates justice from injustice being as yet imperceptible, perhaps not even traced, each nation believed that power constituted right, and directed its actions by this principle so destructive to empires. Every thing was considered lawful which promised success; and, in the event, public censure even fell upon the vanquished. That nation which attempted conquest to obtain a better

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soil, marched in a body toward the coveted country; and in their progress, like a torrent which overwhelms every thing, committed acts of ferocity which barbarians alone could conceive and execute. Such were the Goths who, disgusted with their residence in the marshes between the northern ocean and the Baltic sea, proceeded, with their king Filimer at their head, to the environs of the Vistula, thence to the Palus Mæotis; and finally, ravaging Macedonia, Greece, Dalmatia and Italy, established themselves in Languedoc. One party passed into Spain, but the Moors, as warlike as themselves, soon expelled them from the country.

The enterprise of the Goths was imitated by the Vandals, Sarmatians, Huns, Franks, Germans, Saxons, &c. who inundated all the south of Europe and founded states which in the progress of time have assumed their present forms and boundaries.

Those conquests which had for their object the aggrandizement of states, or the imposition of tribute, were undertaken, like those of our day, with powerful armies composed of the flower of the nation. Thus Sesostris at the head of six hundred thousand infantry and twenty-four thousand cavalry, carried terror, captivity, pillage and death beyond the Ganges. Thus Philip of Macedon, Alexander, and the Romans, augmented their power by the acquisition of new domains; and thus modern nations seek to increase their strength by every accession the chance of arms places within their power.

But no atchievement on the ancient continent bears resemblance to what the Spaniards have accomplish-

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ed in the new: Without forces and without expense, they obtained possession of a country twice the size of Europe, notwithstanding the opposition and resistance of the natives, whose number, compared to that of their conquerors, was in the proportion of four thousand to one.

Spanish Sovereignty established in America.

This conquest, however marvellous, does not so much captivate the imagination, as the establishment of the sovereignty of Spain over countries so vast, and on a foundation so solid that, far from having been shaken by three ages of existence, they appear on the contrary to be confirmed beyond the power of change.

What policy, what wisdom, what address must have been requisite, to bring into dependence, regions, several of which were distant three or four thousand leagues, and of which the greater part had the less reciprocity of wants with Spain, as they gathered the same fruits and the same grain that Europe produced. It cannot even be said that Spain has drawn any assistance from ancient or modern legislation, for the government of its colonies: since it was the first power that formed such establishments. It is therefore exclusively entitled to the whole merit of its success. We are struck with astonishment in comparing the manner in which Spain governs her American possessions, with that employed by other powers to govern theirs. We perceive that by expedients entirely different, she has obtained results at least equally favourable to her sovereignty.

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France, for instance, has adopted as the basis of her system, that the colonies shall be considered, both by the European and the Creole, merely as places of temporary residence, to which individuals should be attracted by the facility of acquiring a fortune, and from which they should depart as soon as that object was accomplished. Spain, on the contrary, permits that all her subjects, American or European, may regard as their country any part of the empire that has given them birth, or which has for them any peculiar attractions.

In the French colonies every thing appertains to cultivation or commerce; each individual must be either a planter or a merchant. In the Spanish possessions, one may embrace any situation of life either civil or religious.

The French Creole who has an inclination for the bar, the church, or the solitude of the cloister; for arms, or for medicine; cannot be gratified but in the mother country: for in the colonies there are neither universities, nor faculties of law or of medicine, nor seminaries; neither bishoprics, nor canonries, nor prebendaries; neither convents, nor military schools. For the services of religion there is but one missionary in each parish; and all the military consists of regiments entirely composed of Europeans. The Spanish Creole may, without change of residence, give to his ambition that direction which he believes most advantageous, and which is best adapted to his taste. I do not pretend that the local prosperity is not greater; I only endeavour to

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prove that the sovereignty of the mother country is not less.

The important trusts, the honors, even the consideration attached to the order of nobility, are but rarely granted out of France. It is necessary to return wealthy into the country to find those enjoyments so agreeable to pride which riches furnish. The Spanish government does not find it inconvenient to extend into its remote possessions, nearly the same honors, favours and distinctions as in Europe; and to individuals who have never been out of America.

It is apparent that France employs every expedient to direct constantly toward the mother country the wishes, and the affections, of all who go to the colonies, or who are born there: it is believed, and with reason, that the more a person considers himself as a stranger, the less will he be inclined to establish himself there. These precautions extend so far as not to permit the Creole children to receive, in the colonies, any other education than is given by teachers, called schoolmasters, who instruct them to read, to write, and to cypher. There are no colleges for their studies, no schools of mathematics, drawing, painting, or riding: it was the wish of government to compel parents to send their children early to France, that they might imbibe impressions favourable to the system of the parent state; a system so well established that there is not a single white inhabitant in the French colonies, who is not desirous to leave them. It is a truth that the happiest day to a Frenchman absent from his country, is the day of his return. The

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Spanish government has believed that it might neglect all these expedients: it trusts, for the formation and the strengthening of the ties of its colonies, to the combination of their laws and the style of their government: experience has proved the calculation just. The organization of this astonishing machine, which occasions it to move thus equably on springs at so great a distance, and in countries dissimilar in climate, inhabitants and productions, is doubtless a master-piece of human skill. Let us cast a glance upon its structure.

Examination of the Spanish Regime.

The political and civil constitution of the Spanish possessions in the new world, has doubtless been the work of time: it was beyond human power to form, at the instant of discovery, a complete code for regions till then unknown, and for establishments of a nature so novel that neither ancient nor modern times furnish an example of the kind.

The idea of making these vast countries domains of the Spanish crown, produced naturally the establishment of the same constituted authorities as in the mother-country. The charge of maintaining the Spanish sovereignty, and of commanding the armed force, was confided to chiefs under the title of *viceroys* or *captains-general*.

The whole of the Spanish possessions in America is divided into four vice-royalties: Mexico, Peru, Buenos Ayres, and Santa-Fé; and six captain-general-

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ships, Porto Rico, Havanna, Caraccas, Guatimala, Chili, and the Philippine Islands in Asia.

The police was entrusted, as in Spain, to the vigilance of cabildos. At first they were placed in the smallest villages. The original population of the new town did not sometimes exceed thirty persons, when they began to build a church, and to establish a cabildo; but after a century it was found that the place had become of sufficient consequence to require *alcades* and *regidors*.

For the administration of justice, *audiences* were created, which at present are thirteen in number. They have their sittings at Mexico, Guadalaxara, Guatimala, the isle of Cuba, Lima, Charcas, Chili, Santa Fé, Quito, Buenos Ayres, Caraccas, Cusco, and the Philippines. Finally, the christian religion obtained bishops, chapters, and convents. There are seven archbishops, who have thirty-seven suffragans.

The powers of these different authorities have received extension or restriction as experience seemed to require. The governors-general, the immediate depositaries of royal authority, possessed too great opportunity of abusing that distinguished prerogative. It has been found requisite to protect Spain against their personal ambition, and the citizens against the possibility of vexatious oppressions. This has been effected, but without impairing the authority of doing every thing in the name of the sovereign.

The cabildos, necessarily composed of Creoles, or of Spaniards destined to pass their lives in America,

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preserve a recollection of the mother country too confined to make them prefer its interests to those of the new soil upon which they have established themselves. The cabildos, in whose eyes the rights of Old Spain are more embarrasing than respectable, cannot but make a dangerous use for her sovereignty, of that authority which the general laws give them: it has been found necessary, therefore, to restrain their powers, and to discourage the establishment of them in new villages.

It is not the same with the audiences: their members all receive pay from the king, they have no favours or superior stations to hope for but from the throne; and the law does not leave to their disposal any effective force that might be productive of injury to Spain. It could not, therefore, be otherwise than useful to invest these superior tribunals with great power and respectability: for in them reside the means of checking the effects of ambition in a chief, and the injustice he might commit without this salutary counterpoise.

Religion, by the morality which forms its basis, contributes also to cement the royal authority in Spanish America. It is a resource of which policy has availed itself with great address. Ministers, bishops and priests are in numerous instances employed with advantage in civil affairs. Even the reins of government are often placed in the hands of prelates; and these periods have ever been the most pacific, if not the most prosperous.

It is manifest that if Spain had introduced her domestic regulations into her American possessions,

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they would long since have thrown off her dominion, or been torn by factions which would have rendered them uninhabitable. It is the wisdom, the prudence of their particular laws which have made them what they are. From the recent establishment of the colonies it was a natural consequence that many of the laws first enacted should not have been adapted to their situation, and should therefore have sometimes produced effects unexpected and prejudicial. He who travels with no other guide than the cardinal points, in an unknown country, where there is neither road nor path, is often compelled to retrace his steps; he advances but slowly and with extreme fatigue. It was thus with the Spanish legislator. He well knew the point he would attain, but he had only reason for his guide, and we must declare to his praise, that it has conducted him across the desart to his proposed destination.

All the laws of the West Indies, which have been found useful in execution, have been collected, and form the code of the Spanish possessions under the title of *Laws of the Indies*. They are punctually followed in all cases in which they have not been varied by subsequent statutes. Where they are silent the laws of the realm are observed, termed *Leyes de partidas*.

Council of the Indies.

This system, worthy of admiration for the deep root it has given to the royal authority in America, has been entirely effected by the council of the In-

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dies. Government, whose sagacity is honoured by this establishment, had no sooner recognized the necessity of a legislation for the West-Indies, different from that of Spain, than it confided the supreme administration of affairs in the new world to a council, whose duty it was to form and cement the relations of the mother country with the colonies. This respecta ble tribunal, to which the Spanish throne owes most of its splendour, takes date from 1511. The great qualifications requisite to become a member and the constant attention that is given to make it a species of honourable retreat for personages who fill the first stations in America, have acquired for this tribunal a consideration so much the more merited, as its decisions have ever borne the stamp of impartiality, wisdom and experience.

Its authority extends without exception to every thing that relates to the West-Indies. It has cognizance by means of an appeal, termed by the Spaniards, *recurso*, of causes decided by the audiences. All its deliberations are taken by plurality of voices, except the repeal of laws. In these cases the constitution requires two thirds.

The presentation to all important stations, civil and ecclesiastical, the reward of those employed whose merits are conspicuous, the police of the tribunals, military establishment, finances, commerce, all have their source in the council of the Indies. Its power, which has never been abused, has always been augmenting, and is at present so great that it holds in check all Spanih America.

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Its integrity so effectually disconcerts intrigue that every Spaniard, wealthy and powerful, who in his cause or his pretensions has more to hope from favour than from justice, directs all his efforts to avoid the jurisdiction of the council of the Indies. His only hope of success rests on bringing his cause to the decision of the ministers whom it is incomparably more easy to deceive.*

If the Spaniards have an advantage over us in possessing a permanent corps, which watches incessantly over their colonies, we have that of a better organization in the ministry. Every thing that relates to our colonies, whether in regard to laws, war, justice, police, or finances, is sent by the same minister of the marine and of the colonies; and to him also every thing that concerns them is addressed. In Spain, on the contrary, the minister of war has all the military correspondence of the Indies; the minister of the *real hacienda* that of the finances, &c. This multiplicity

* The homage I render to the council of the Indies is entitled to more consideration, as when the misfortunes of St. Domingo obliged me to pass into the Spanish dominions, I arrived with a prepossession against the council, produced by the works of celebrated writers, particularly the Abbe Millot, who in his political and military memoirs says: "there are abuses "in all the councils of Spain, and in that of the Indies more than in any "other; instead of punishing malversations, they support the culpable in "proportion to the presents received from them." During twelve successive years that I have been within the limits of their jurisdiction, I have seen cause to applaud all their decisions: nor can I cite a single instance of corruption or of favour. The oppressed, whatever may be the credit of his oppressor, regards his cause as gained, when he is certain that it will be carried to the council of the Indies. It is necessary to have resided among the Spaniards of America to know the veneration in which this august tribunal is held.

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of channels is rendered the more injurious, as the king forbids the execution of any order that does not come from the minister of that particular department. It follows that the king frequently gives orders through the minister of war, which are not executed by the intendants or their deputies, if they are not at the same time addressed by the minister of the *real hacienda*, or of the finances. For example, the king gives orders to repair certain fortifications or to construct new, to purchase or to build some edifice, at his pleasure. If the minister of the *real hacienda* does not send an order to defray the expenses, the will of the king remains uncomplied with. In the beginning of 1802 the order of the king, through the minister at war, came to Caraccas, for the forming a secretaryship better suited to the important office of captain-general, as well for the number and pay of those employed, as for the respectability of the establishment. The minister of the *real hacienda* was silent, and his silence delayed for more than a year this necessary reform. It is difficult to cite a single case in which this division can be useful, but a thousand may be readily noticed in which the most injurious consequences may result. Where there is an unison of will, there must be an unison of action, without which there exists a want of concert that must ever produce injurious effects.

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Representative of the King.

The king is immediately represented in the general government of Venezuela, and its dependencies, by a captain-general, who is also governor and president of the royal audience, and of all the tribunals, excepting those which relate to the royal treasures, and to commerce.

His Powers.

In the former capacity his authority extends over the whole province of Venezuela, and also those of Maracaïbo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the isle of Margaretta. Every thing relating to fortifications, arms, defence of the country, and in a word, the whole military establishment, is immediately under his orders. He may order every thing without the concurrence or counsel of any one, but he generally submits every case of importance to an assembly or commission, composed of the first military officers. This council is termed *Junta de Guerra.*

In his quality of captain-general he is exclusively charged with all political relations between the colonial government of foreign powers, and his particular district.

As governor, his authority is circumscribed to the province of Venezuela; yet, a commander has lately been appointed at Venezuela, who exercises the functions of governor in a district formed in the south-

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western part of that same province. Cumana, Guiana, Maracaïbo and the isle of Margaretta have also their respective governors, who, in civil affairs, possess the same powers in their provinces that the governor of Caraccas exercises in his. They are appointed for five years. These governors also enjoy, each in his own district, the prerogatives of vice-patrons. They have cognizance, in the first instance, of all civil and criminal affairs in the places of their residence; but to obviate the defects which would unavoidably result from a want of that knowledge, which can only be acquired by means the reverse of those which form the good soldier, the law obliges them to use the assistance, in all judicial affairs, of a counsellor at law, who records and signs the sentences. He has the title of assistant. He is appointed and paid by the king, independent of the perquisites he receives in those causes which pass under his notice. The sentences have no validity without the signature of the governor. If they appear to him contrary to justice, or to political convenience, he can pass the documents to another person, termed assistant *ad hoc*, who furnishes a new sentence. The governor has even the ability of giving a decision contrary to the advice of these legal counsellors; but he only employs it in cases where so extraordinary a measure may be readily justified.

To all these prerogatives of chief of the public authority, he adds that of presiding at the audience.—Happily the legislator has wisely guarded against any abuse that might result from his influence in the only

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tribunal that is permitted to investigate his actions. By the means which the law has provided, this privilege, on the first glance so dangerous to public liberty, becomes on the contrary its support. For in rendering it purely honorary, a double advantage has been obtained. The representative of the king is invested with a respectability that maintains the majesty of the throne, reflected in him as in a mirror; yet without any augmentation of his power.

The president assists at the sittings of the audience whenever he pleases, and visits it at any hour, the tribunal being in session. If he announces to the audience his intention, a deputation is sent to accompany him from the palace of government to that of justice. He generally dispenses with this ceremony by not apprising them. On his arrival the guard turns out under arms, and a person in a loud voice announces *The President!* All the advocates, attornies, registers and notaries of the audience present themselves to receive him and ascend in his *suite*.—The whole audience rise and receive him at the door of the chamber. He is conducted to his chair, and it is not until after he is seated, and in virtue of his permission, that the members of the audience resume their seats. After the sitting, all the members of the audience, the regent, oidors, and fiscal, accompany the president to his palace, and to the door of his apartment.

This ceremonial would indicate that the president rarely attends the audience, or that he exercises over it a command very prejudicial to the liberty of opinion.

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The first idea has been contradicted by the practice of several presidents. I am a witness that the captain-general of Caraccas, Don Manuel de Guevara Vasconzelos, never failed to attend the audience, unless prevented by urgent affairs of government. The second suggestion is not less erroneous, since the president has neither a deliberative nor a consulting voice. He may see and hear, but must be silent, unless some scandalous infraction of forms compel him to speak. The law has willed that this species of superintendence, or watchfulness, should remind the judge of his duties, but without constraining the exercise of his conscience in the decision of affairs.

His Duties.

In consequence of this superintendence, the presidents can render to the council of the Indies an account of all contraventions of laws which the members of the audiences may commit, either in their official functions or in private life; but every complaint must be accompanied with satisfactory documents. They may even direct secret inquests against any member of the audience whose conduct has excited suspicion.

The governor, president, or captain-general, has an indisputable right to take, in cases not provided for by law, such measures as he may conceive proper for the public safety, or the police of cities. But the responsibility which ever follows him, sufficiently advises him of the danger he would incur in making

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too absolute a use of this privilege: if he acts with prudence, he will in all cases of a delicate nature, obtain such information as will always protect him against injurious results.

His powers are great, and the law chooses that they should appear still greater than they are. To the eyes of the vulgar, who confound honours with power, he can do what he pleases. In the eyes of the law he can only do what is just, what is reasonable. His ambition and his despotism are restrained by the rigid account he must give of his proceedings at the expiration of his office.

The constitution of the Indies has neglected nothing to make these images of the king independent, by rendering them in some sort strangers in the countries they govern. All their affections are fettered. They cannot possess, within the boundaries of their government, for their visible property, more than four slaves: they are prohibited from commerce and from marriage: they and their children are forbidden to attend weddings or interments, or to present infants at the baptismal fount.

It is evident that these prohibitions are intended to deprive them of all those relations which might give a bias to that impartiality so essential in him who commands; without which he soon acquires a partiality for individuals, and is not slow to commit acts of injustice. Even the preferences accorded by predilection, announce the oppression those may expect who are objects of dislike. It is necessary to be more than human, to plunge into the torrent of the passions without being borne away by them. The

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laws in this respect are therefore excellent, and their precautions admirable. Is the object accomplished? This is a question which I must leave undecided.

His Appointments.—Duration of his Office.

The appointments of the captain-general of Caraccas, are 9,000 dollars per annum. What arises from his deciding causes in the first instance, and the other perquisites attached to his station, nearly double that sum. His term of office is seven years: it is never extended, but tacitly, or by circumstances of war, or other events, which prevent the appearance of his successor.

Succession of the Government.

In the event of sickness, he may resign the command to him whom the law specifies; but as soon as he has received the sacraments, he has no longer a choice. The general command passes then in full authority to the successor provided by law, and he cannot resume it unless he should recover his health.

We have said that the captains-general must render immediately after quitting their stations, and even in the same place in which they have filled them, a severe account of the use they have made of their powers. The form in which this account is rendered is sufficiently curious to be related, and sufficiently good to receive imitation. The Spaniards call this act *dar residencia* to give the *residence.*

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Account rendered by the King's Representative, at the Expiration of his Office.

An absolute chief, who knows no superior authority within two or three thousand leagues, and who holds from the law an unlimited power, has dangerous means to oppress and to vex the citizens, if they have no other resource than the ordinary avenues of justice. The credit and the riches he would have acquired by the very abuse of his power, would enable him to brave with facility those tedious and expensive suits, which the poor, upon whom the weight of injustice falls, would neither dare to undertake, nor be able to sustain.

On the other hand, to make a governor-general liable to prosecutions during his office, was to expose him, in particular among a people attached to litigation, as a mark for the restless jealousy of those who owed him obedience. It would be to provide a fountain of chicaneries and vexations, which would soon deprive his authority of that respect, with which it was the interest of the Spanish sovereignty to invest it. It therefore became requisite to adopt some expedient which should leave to the chief all his powers, the full abiltity of action during the exercise of his functions, and yet restrain him within the limits of justice. It was impossible to find one better calculated to accomplish this great object than the imposing perspective of a tribunal, expressly constituted to detect and to punish his errors. This institution, the best safe-guard of the citizen against arbitrary acts of every description, does honour to

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the sagacity of him who conceived the idea, to the solicitude for his subjects of the king who adopted it, and to the wisdom of the monarch by whom it is continued.

When a viceroy or governor is to be replaced, the council of the Indies, immediately after the nomination of a new titular, present three persons, to one of whom the king gives a commission to receive the *residence*, of the late viceroy or governor. The choice usually falls on a legal character resident in America.

The commissary of the residence repairs to the capital of the government. He announces by banns and by placards the particular day on which the tribunal of the residence of the late viceroy or governor will be formed, and the house it will occupy: inviting citizens of all orders, classes, and conditions, who may have complaints against the said viceroy or governor, to attend and give in their declarations, that justice may be done. This publication must be made in such a manner that no person can be ignorant of it. One statute of 9 October 1556, orders that it shall in particular be made known to the Indians, that they may demand reparation for any wrongs they may have suffered.

The *residence* of governors continues sixty days, and the complaints must be tried within sixty other days, counting from the day on which they were made. The residence of viceroys is six months.—After these periods, no further complaints are admitted. The proceedings of the residence of viceroys, governors, &c. are forwarded to the council of the Indies, who decide on them definitively.

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During a long time all public functionaries had to undergo the proof of the residence; but by *cedule* (or decree) of the 4th of August, 1799, alcades, regidors, alguazils, attornies, &c. have been exempted: viceroys, presidents, governors political and military, intendants of armies, and intendants corregidors, are alone subjected to this test.

This obligation is so rigidly enforced, that none of these officers can occupy a new station, without presenting a certificate to the authority which puts him in possession, showing that no charge has been substantiated against him in regard to his former employ.

I request the reader not to infer from my opinion of the tribunals of residence, my confidence in their efficacy. My homage is immediately and solely addressed to the wisdom of the law. I resign all criticism on its operation to those who know the seductive influence of Plutus over the feeble and pliant Themis.

The representative of royal authority, and his concerns having been described, we necessarily proceed to notice that high tribunal in which resides the exclusive administration of justice in its last resort.

Royal Audience.

The whole district which now forms the audience of Caraccas, appertained to that of St. Domingo, from the discovery of Terra-Firma to the year 1718. At that period the king, having established the new kingdom of Grenada, placed all Terra-Firma in its

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district. Caraccas and its dependencies were from that time submitted to the audience of Santa-Fé; but this arrangement appears to have been of short continuance. I have made fruitless endeavours to procure the order of the king by which they were restored to the audience of St. Domingo. The only title my curiosity has discovered is a royal decree of the year 1729, which returns to the audience of St. Domingo the examination of a rule, made in the preceding year, for the rites and ceremonies of the cathedral of Caraccas. From this we can infer, that the jurisdiction of the audience of Santa-Fé over this part of Terra-Firma had, at most, but ten years duration.

In fact, whether the provinces of Caraccas were under the audience of Santa-Fé, or under that of St. Domingo, it is equally obvious that the great distance of these two courts must have occasioned excessive inconvenience. A complainant could not make himself heard at either tribunal, but by means of long and painful journies, occasioning immense expense, extreme fatigue, and often the loss of life.

Santa-Fé, the capital of the new kingdom of Grenada, is 250 leagues to the south-west of Caraccas. The communication is so difficult, that the established courier, or post, takes 42 days, in the favourable season, to go from one of these cities to the other. St. Domingo is nearly equally distant to the north. Independent of the objections to such removals, the Caribbean Sea, which it is necessary to cross, renders these journies dangerous, particularly in time of war: as well on account of the funds which must be taken

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or remitted, as of the papers which necessarily follow the complaint. In addition to these objections, a long time elapsed before the province of Venezuela was sufficiently populous to be entitled to an audience, and sufficiently productive to support the expence. It is therefore astonishing that a measure so long presenting only advantages, should not have been adopted till so recent a period.

Establishment of the Royal Audience at Caraccas.

The audience of Caraccas was established by a royal *cedule* of 1786, which gave to it the same district as the captain-general: viz. the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaïbo, Cumana, Varinas, Guiana, and the island of Margaretta. It held its first session in 1787.

How composed.

It is composed of a president, who is the captain-general; a regent at a salary of 5,300 dollars; three oidors at 3,300 each; two fiscals, one for civil and criminal affairs, the other for the finances, at 3,300 each, a single reporter at 500, with perquisites; and an alguazil major without stated salary.

Its Costume.

The official dress of members of the audience consists in a robe of black taffety, in form of a cloak or mantle, the other habiliments are also black. Un-

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til of late, they wore, suspended from a button hole, a kind of white wand, which among the Spaniards is a general badge of jurisdiction, and before which all trembled. They are doubtless considered sufficiently potent without the virtue of this talisman; for they carry it no longer.

Its Sessions.

The audience holds its sessions on any day except holidays, *(feries)* from 8 to 11 o'clock in the morning. It tries few causes, has but one reporter, and the forms adopted for his reports consume much time and furnish little instruction. The reporter reads all the papers, and they are always voluminous, however trivial the object in dispute. The cases are very few in which the reading is completed at one sitting. This inconvenient form slackens the course of justice, and gives to the judges a much less clear idea of the question, than would be produced by an abstract made with care and intelligence.

Measures to expedite the Proceedings of the Audiences.

The tardiness of judgment, and the accumulation of causes in the tribunals of appeal, induced the king to take measures for restoring to the ministers of justice that consideration of which they had been deprived by complaints against them. It was ordered by cedule of 4th of August, 1802, that governors and presidents of audiences shall furnish to the king an accurate statement of all causes before these tribunals,

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with the reasons of their suspension. They are to advise at the same time, as well respecting the incapacity, or wilful negligence of the members, as concerning expedients to regulate the course of justice. According to the same cedule, this statement must be rendered every year. It evidently gives the presidents an influence over the audiences, thus augmenting their authority at the expense of the highest tribunals in the nation.

Consideration in which the Audiences are held.

The audiences are highly respected by the Spaniards, and when the members are men of unquestionable talents and integrity, they are regarded with a degree of submission and reverence, almost amounting to adoration.

Nothing has been neglected by the laws, to banish ignorance, partiality, favouritism, malice and cupidity, from these sanctuaries of justice. An administration, so august, is confided only to persons of correct deportment, and upright characters, and who have received those degrees which are, and ought to be, granted solely to learning.

Obligations imposed on Members of the Audiences.

According to the law they should live in retirement, in order that they may not form connections detrimental to the free exercise of their functions. They are not merely excused, but excluded, from being godfathers at a marriage or baptism; and from assist-

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ing at weddings or funerals. Neither they, nor their wives, are permitted to associate with merchants, because the legislator considers that class of citizens as the most likely to appeal to the audiences for the recovery of debts, and to be prosecuted by their creditors.

The members of the audiences would even contravene the letter of the law, were they to employ pleaders, or seek their acquaintance. This cautious policy has even gone so far as to interdict their residing with advocates, reporters, or registers. They are not allowed to engage in mercantile speculations, not even to put out money on interest. Lest luxury should open to them the doors of vice, the number of slaves in the service of each *oidor* or member of an audience, is limited to four. The use of horse-cloths, which are very costly trappings in Spain, from the richness and profusion of their embroidery, is also denied them. Wealth can never influence them in their decrees. They are forbidden to borrow and still more to receive presents. No gambling should be suffered in their houses, and their wives should make but few visits. The president is particularly charged to watch that no intimacies, always injurious to the impartial discharge of justice, are formed between the judges and those under their jurisdiction. Among their prohibitions also, are the possession of rented property, and alliances within the district of their audience. These restrictions extend also to their families, as long as they continue members of audiences. All these measures are evidently intended to render these ministers of justice worthy of the high functions assigned them.

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Prerogatives of the Audiences.

The tribunals of audience besides the administration of justice in cases of appeal, have also other powers, which constitute them in a manner defenders of the public liberty, and supporters of the royal authority. Every thing is submitted to their jurisdiction, to their censure, to their inspection. To give an idea of the extent of their powers, I need only remark, that the ecclesiastical tribunals are under their controul. They have cognisance of appeals from sentences passed by the ecclesiastical tribunal. They have the power even of condemning the judges of that tribunal to render satisfaction for their usurpations; to summon them before the court of the audience, and to detain them there until they exhibit the apostolic letters, which invest them with their authority; they decide also the disputes between the secular and ecclesiastical tribunals; in a word, they govern those who govern all the rest.

The king recommends to the viceroys and captains-general, that they should consult the audiences on every extraordinary emergency, or incident of government; and sundry acts prescribe the same submission to the decisions of the audiences, as if they emanated from the king. The audience of Caraccas devotes, on every Monday and Thursday, an hour, or an hour and a half, after its sittings, to such matters of high administration.

They term this deliberation *acuerdo*. The captain-general is rarely absent, and the fiscal is still more punctual.

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These tribunals have the privilege, uncommon in the Indies, of corresponding with the king, without the privity of the viceroys, presidents or captains-general. They may communicate to his majesty every thing which appears to them important, in matters of government and justice.

When the authority of the president clashes with that of the audience, the latter makes the necessary remonstrances: if those are fruitless, the will of the president is executed, and an appeal made to the king, who never fails to make the transgressor return to the path of the law, and to punish his infractions, according to the importance of the case.

It is to the royal audiences, that the king and the council of the Indies always apply for information in affairs, where the viceroys and governors are at variance. To them also, are confided all important commissions, with the exception of the military department.

The distinguished place which the audiences hold in the hierarchy of public authorities, is evident from the right, granted him by the laws of the Indies, of exercising the functions of viceroys and governors, either deceased or absent from the place where the audiences reside. They are then invested with absolute command. The regent, or the oldest *oidor*, represents the head of the vacated executive power; but all matters of government should be submitted to the deliberations of the audience.

It has latterly, however, been discovered that the confiding the defence and police of a country to men, who, by their situation are naturally deficient in mi-

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itary knowledge, presents inconveniences which the danger of an invasion, or internal troubles, do not fail to augment. It has consequently been thought the most natural and advisable, in case of vacancies, that the general command should devolve upon the military officer who ranks next to the deceased or absent chief. In this manner has it been decided for the provinces of Caraccas, by an order of the king, dated March, 1800, commanding that Don Manuel De Cagigal, brigadier of the armies and lieutenant of the king, should exercise, to the exclusion of the audience, all the functions of Don Manuel De Guevara Vasconzelos, governor, president and captain-general, who was then on his circuit *(en tournee.)*

Nothing manifests more clearly the high consideration with which the king would distinguish the audiences, than the deference to their members, which he exacts from the viceroys and captains-general. A decree of the 5th September, 1680, ordains that the viceroys treat the oidors *with all the respect due to their characters, as their brethren, and as magistrates whom the king honours with all his confidence.* The same decree observes, that when an oidor visits the viceroys on public affairs he should be immediately admitted. The viceroys should offer him a seat, and listen to him as a father, a chief, a president, and a protector. In short they salute the audiences with the title of *Highnesses* in all writings presented to them.

The prerogatives of the royal audiences would furnish matter for a longer description, of which I should not have deprived the reader, if those which

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I pass over in silence were of material consequence to those which I have reported. I shall therefore do no injury to this part of my subject, in passing to that of the cabildos.

Cabildos.

A more correct idea of the cabildos cannot be conveyed than in comparing them to the municipalities established by the constituent assembly. The sole difference is, that the cabildos have no mayor. They have *alcades in ordinary*, who correspond to our municipal officers; *regidors* who form the deliberative body, in the same manner as the notables form the council of the commune; a *syndic* who exercises the same functions that were exercised by the attornies of the commune in the municipalities; and a register charged with the digesting of the acts, and the care of the minutes.

Their Establishment in Spain.

This institution, purely municipal, was introduced in Spain about the same time that Louis Le Gros established communes in France, and from the same causes. In both kingdoms the kings beheld in the barons and counts, troublesome rivals, usurpers of those rights exclusively appertaining to the crown, oppressors of the people, who became blind and passive instruments of their attempts against the royal authority. The government, disgraced by the insolence of these powerful vassals, found the only means

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of regaining its proper dignity, was to enfranchise their slaves, and to establish in the cities municipal tribunals, composed of their own inhabitants, to whom were committed the care of the police, and the cognisance of many judiciary matters, which they should exercise under the immediate authority of the crown. This revolution was effected without any commotion.

The barons ceased to be tyrants, for they had no longer any victims; they ceased to command, for they were no longer obeyed. All the love, all the submission of the people turned towards the throne, which they considered as the fountain of benevolence; and the royal power acquired that additional importance and stability, which it ought to have in every well regulated government.

Different circumstances occurring in the history of France, contributed to weaken and restrain the authority of the municipal tribunal. They were nearly extinct before the revolution, except at Thoulouse; while in Spain they exercised during those ages the plenitude of their primitive powers; which they preserve under the name of cabildos.

Origin of the Cabildos in America.

It was doubtless the high respect that the Spanish nation had for these municipal establishments, which persuaded the conquerors of America, that the government of these new possessions ought necessarily to have the cabildos for its basis; they also established them, as I have already observed, in all the vil-

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lages which they founded. The consequence was that, having no other tribunal for a counterpoise, the cabildos, in the provinces dependent on Caraccas, extended their powers to a degree which had never been known in Spain. Every thing proceeded from them, excepting the military, and in a little time their authority no longer knew any limits.

Their excessive Power.

The weakness of governor Villacinda suffered the cabildos of Venezuela to take a gigantic stride towards the usurpation of sovereign power. This governor, who died in 1556, ordained, to the prejudice of his lieutenant-general, that during the vacancy the cabildos should govern the province, each in his district, until the arrival of a regular successor. Never perhaps did imagination conceive an idea so absurd; but it was too flattering to those whom it clothed with authority, not to be considered by them as wise. Thus were the powers of government divided and distributed into the inexperienced hands of the cabildos. Each district of a cabildo became a republic, independent of the republic in its vicinity. This provisionary government presented, during a year that it existed, a complete picture of chaos and confusion.

In the mean time, the cabildos, flattered with this unhoped for and injurious prerogative, sought to render it permanent, and convert it into a right. For this purpose, they deputed to the king an inhabitant of Truxillo, named Don Sancho Briseno, a man of insinuating manners and great capacity.

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He was instructed to request:

1. That a freighted ship might come every year to Borburata, on the account of the inhabitants, on paying one half of the usual duties. This was granted, and continued in force for a long time.

2. The liberty of introducing, free of duties, two hundred negroes, on account also of the inhabitants. *Granted.*

3. That the convents of St. Francis and St. Dominic, of Hispaniola, might send monks to Terra Firma, to supply the want of priests. *Granted.*

4. That the king would decide, that in case of the death or absence of the governor-general, the command of the province should pass into the hands of the cabildos.

Every person, who has not lost the use of reason, will find this last request indiscreet, misplaced and ridiculous; for, at the present day, our ideas on the exercise of power are more correct than those which prevailed at the time we are treating of: But then, the imperfection, or to speak more properly, the total want of system in the relations between the mother country and the West-Indies, occasioned that these pretensions were found natural, reasonable and admissible.

The act of the 8th of December, 1560, relative to this subject, is expressed as follows:

"We declare and ordain that, when our governor "of the province of Venezuela dies, before we have "appointed his successor, the alcades in ordinary of "towns and cities shall govern each in his district

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"until we have nominated another governor; and by "this act we give the alcades power to govern during "the said time."

Such a title, which conferred more credit on the negotiator who obtained it, than on the understanding of those by whom it was granted, gave new *eclat* to the cabildos, and opened a new field for their pretensions.

On the first vacancy of governor, which took place in 1675, by the death of Don Francisco Davila de Orejon, the audience of St. Domingo named, according to custom, a governor *pro tempore*. The choice fell on one of its members Don Juan de Padila Guardiola y Gusuran. He presented himself to the cabildo of Caraccas to be received. The alcades, Don Manuel de Felipe de Torbare, and Don Domingo Galido y Payas, strongly opposed this nomination. They grounded their opposition on the act of 1560, which confided the government *pro tem.* to the alcades in ordinary of towns and cities, in their respective districts, until the titular, nominated by the king, had taken possession; and that the audience of St. Domingo had no right to alter either the letter or sense of this positive order of the king, to which they as well as all other classes of citizens owed obedience. From thence arose debates, quarrels, recriminations and factions.

The cabildo continued to govern, and encouraged by the success of Briseno in Spain, dispatched immediately another deputy to the king, soliciting another act, not merely interpretative of that of 1560, but still more extensive, demanding no less then the

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exclusive right for the alcades in ordinary of Caraccas, of governing the whole province, in the interval between the death of a governor and the arrival of his successor. Don Juan de Arrechederoa had the courage to be the bearer of this presumptuous request to Spain; and the minister the weakness, still more astonishing, to receive him favourably. His majesty approved the conduct of the cabildo of Caraccas towards the oidor Padila; and, that the rights of the cabildo of Caraccas might be no longer equivocal, they were determined by an act of the 18th of September, 1676; which stated, "That for the future, whatever cause "may have vacated the office of Governor of Vene-"zuela, the alcades of the city of Caraccas shall go-"vern all the province, with the same rights and pre-"rogatives as the titulars; nor shall the audience of "St.-Domingo, under any pretext or motive, name "a governor *pro tem.*"

It is sufficient to know the qualities which are required in an alcade, and the duration of his office, which is but one year, in order to judge of the ill effects to which this measure gave rise. It is evident that powers as important and extensive as those of governor and captain-general, when ceded to men who could not, except by uncommon chance, unite in opinion so as to act with wisdom, would contribute but little to insure external defence or internal tranquillity.

The history of the Spanish government in America abounds with faults of this nature. It was a long time before the ministry was convinced, that the same talents did not prevail in all ranks and professions.

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They appointed indiscriminately to the office of governor, a member of the bar, a military man, a priest or a secular. How many Spanish bishops are there, as I have had occasion to observe, on the chronological list of governors in America, presiding over the audiences, and even commanding the armies? Have we not seen that the audiences are called, by the laws of the Indians, to supply the places of vice-roys and captains-general?

This error, however, of delegating to an individual, functions foreign to his station, is nearly exploded. It is rare, at present, that the government confides the command of the public forces to any other than military characters; that the priests are called to any but religious functions; or that the bishops are drawn from the discharge of episcopal to that of civil duties?

The vacancies of governors will in a little while be universally supplied, as they are at Caraccas, by men of the highest military rank. It is thus, that all the works of man advance by slow degrees toward perfection, and experience gradually conducts us through errors and difficulties to truth.

Usurpation.

This triumph was particularly calculated to lead the cabildos into excesses, highly injurious to the exercise of the superior authority. The law, which placed in their hands the reins of government in case of vacancy, operated to awaken the desire of wrest-

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ing those reins from the hands that held them. All their actions would naturally incline to this object. The annals of the province still contain divers facts which confirm this supposition. This may be determined by the following circumstance, which succeeded the act of the 18th of September, 1676.

In 1725, the alcades in ordinary, of Caraccas, deposed Don Diego Portales from the government, and threw him into prison, by order of the viceroy and the audience of Santa-Fe. The manuscript ecclesiastical history of the province of Venezuela, by father Tamaun, where this event is recorded, is silent as to the motives of this order, but it leaves room for suspicion that it was granted at the solicitation of the alcades.

Governor Portales immediately communicated what had happened to him to bishop Escalona, who was then making the circuit of his bishoprick and could not return in less than two months to Caraccas. His intervention was so much the more necessary, since it appears that on a similar circumstance having previously occurred, the king had sent to this prelate an act, dated the 5th of May, 1721, by which he was enabled to release governor Portales from prison, if ever such an affair should be again repeated, and to reinstate him in the government, if he should have been removed. The obstacles to his liberation were trifling, but to his restoration to the government they were very formidable.

On the 14th May, 1726, the bishop summoned the cabildo to receive Don Diego Portales as the legitimate governor. The only reply to this summons was

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a recourse to arms, which threatened in an alarming degree, the tranquillity of the city of Caraccas. The prudence, however, observed by the bishop in his proceedings, prevented the evils which this criminal resistance would naturally have occasioned. Perceiving that he could not publicly perform the formalities which the reinstating of the governor required, without an effusion of blood, which he would willingly avoid, he contented himself with discharging them in his episcopal palace. Don Diego Portales immediately retired into the interior, to obtain obedience from the other towns. As soon as the cabildo of Caraccas was informed of this, it dispatched eight hundred of the troops towards Valencia, to seize the governor and conduct him to the capital. Fortunately for him, he had taken another direction.

The most serious troubles agitated the province. The parties were near coming to blows, and that would have been the event, if the decree of the king dated 18th July, 1725, rendered on the earliest advices given by Portales, had not been sufficiently clear and peremptory to awe the faction. As it left no room for subterfuge, the authority was remitted, by order of the king, into those hands from which it had been unjustly snatched by the ambition of the cabildo of Caraccas.

This is not all; the injury which these shocks of power gave to the sovereign authority, were the more reprehensible, as being subversive of all submission and dependence. To pass them over with impunity might have been productive of fatal consequences; to

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prevent which the king was obliged to punish them; but he punished lightly.

By an act of the 26th January, 1726, the conduct of the audience of Santa-Fe was censured, and its president and members condemned to a fine of 200 dollars, and to render up their process against Portales, to Escalona, the bishop of Caraccas. The alcades and regidors of Caraccas who had opposed, on the 14th May, 1725, the reinstating of governor Portales, were also condemned each to a fine of 1000 dollars, and to be sent to Spain by the bishop, with their process.

Restraint.

This instance of obstinacy from the cabildo of Caraccas, joined to many others which had preceded, demonstrated clearly the danger of its too great preponderance; and how easily the immoderate desire of sovereign power made it forget what was due to the supreme authority and the public tranquillity. It is not then surprising, that the government which at first believed the cabildos equally useful in America as in Europe, should discover its error, and seek to remedy it by ceasing to increase their number, and by diminishing the influence of those that existed. Thenceforth the cabildos were placed under the eye and inspection of the military commandants, and almost dependent on the lieutenant-governors or civil officers, named by the governors with the title of *Justicia Mayor*. Perhaps these precautions were carried too far. The cabildos beheld themselves deprived of many prerogatives; but that of Caraccas experienced

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a more serious reduction in its power than any other, and at the same time made the least murmuring. Its members, little anxious to give greater latitude to a jurisdiction demanding such great care and assiduity, contented themselves with the precedence conferred by their stations, and discharged with lukewarm zeal the functions which were incontestably a part of their duties. There is nothing more difficult for man, than to observe rigidly the line which separates his rights from his duties.

Their Composition.

The variations which time and circumstances have made in the jurisdiction of the cabildos, have had no effect upon their construction, which retains nearly its original form. Each cabildo has two alcades, who are called ordinaries, and who are appointed every year on the first of January, by a majority of the regidors. The regidors are permanent in office, and are proportioned to the importance of the city or cabildo.

The following is the constitution of that at Caraccas.

1. The governor of the province, president of all the cabildos in his district.

2. Two alcades in ordinary, of whom the first elected is called *alcade de primer voto:* he bears *la vara* of justice, which the members of the audience carried formerly.

3. Twelve regidors, whose offices are venal. The incumbent may present this office to a subject, provided that the giver survives twenty-one days of the cession.

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4. Four other places of regidor, which the king confers gratuitously on citizens born in Spain, and settled in the town.

5. Four other officers who are denominated *de oficio*, with the qualities of *alferez real*, of provincial alcade, of *alguazil mayor*, and of *fiel executor*. These last employs are purchased. The first is attached to the household, *Palacios y Sojo*, at Caraccas.

All have a deliberate voice. This cabildo has also a syndic with consulting powers.

All the other cabildos of the provinces of Caraccas have fewer members, but none have less than two alcades and six regidors.

No village, parish or hamlet, is allowed to have cabildos. It is necessary that the place should be dignified, by the king, with the title of town, *(villa)* in order to obtain this popular tribunal. The city of Cindad has had them for a long time, and on account of its great population has more extensive privileges.

Elections.

I have before observed, that the election of alcades takes place every year on the first of January. The voters are the regidors. They alone have always exercised this right in America; for, at the time of the discovery of the new world, the people on whom this part of the sovereignty was originally conferred, exercised it no longer in Spain.

The elections of these magistrates of the people are protected against all constraint and violence.—

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They should be made only in the town houses. The governors cannot form assemblies of cabildos in their houses, nor go to them attended by military officers.

The laws expressly forbid the viceroys, presidents, and oidors, to oppose any obstacle to the free election of the alcades. Any exercise of authority, any intercession, any suggestion for the purpose of giving the suffrages a different direction from that pointed out by the consciences of the electors, is a punishable offence.

Time and prudence have, however, established that, as soon as they have proceeded to elect, they should furnish the governor with a list of the candidates, for his approbation. In places where there are no governors, this care is committed to the *justicia mayor*.

The requisite qualifications for a candidate are residence in the district of the cabildo, information, a knowledge of reading and writing, and such other qualities as are necessary in the Spanish empire, to render an individual worthy of distinguished employ.

All ecclesiastics, all military characters, except those who serve in the militia and are otherwise qualified, and all who are indebted to the king, are ineligible to the office of alcade.

It is recommended, by the law, to nominate in preference, when of equal merit, the descendants of those who first discovered, who tranquillized, or who peopled the West-Indies.

In case of the death or absence of an alcade in ordinary, the oldest regidor exercises his functions.

The cabildos hold their sittings on fixed days.—

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They cannot convene any extraordinary assembly without informing the governor or his representative thereof, and imparting to him the subject of their intended deliberations.

The deliberations of the cabildos, the decrees of the king, the dispatches of the governors, should all be entered in registers appropriated to that purpose.

On every cabildo, however large the town, the number of alcades in ordinary, is limited to two.

Neither the alcades in ordinary, nor regidors can carry on trade or commerce, in any of the supplies necessary for the cities. This prohibition extends still farther in respect to the regidors; who are forbidden to engage in any kind of merchandise, either personally, or by agents, unless they have permission from the king.

Powers of the Cabildos.

According to the laws of the Indies, the alcades in ordinary, in places where there are neither governors nor lieutenant-governors, have cognisance of all such causes as would be cognisable by governors, or their lieutenants, in the places where they reside. They are carried by appeal, before the audiences. To moderate the power of the cabildos, however, there is established, as shall be shown, in each place of their residence, a *justicia mayor*, who discharges the functions of a lieutenant-governor. Those who demand justice may address themselves indifferently, either to the alcades or *justicia mayor*. Their sentences have the same force, and are equally carried by ap-

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peal before the audiences. The Indians have also their particular cabildos.—(See chap. iv.)

Lieutenants of Justice.

In such places as have no cabildos, the police and administration of justice are committed to the wisdom or the ignorance, the zeal or the indifference, the disinterestedness or the selfishness, in a word, to the good or evil conduct of a single man, whom the governor dignifies with the title of *Lieutenant of Justice.* His jurisdiction generally extends over three or four villages. No one but himself has a right to interfere, either directly or indirectly, in public affairs. His power is almost unlimited, as well as undivided. He is to account to nobody but the governor, for the measures he adopts to insure the public safety.

The nomination of lieutenants of justice is for two years, but they may be re-elected.

Their sentences in litigated affairs, go by appeal before the audiences, the ignorance of whom leaves them all possible latitude to give a cause any turn they think proper. It is rare that the packet presented to the tribunal of appeal, does not contain papers, justifying the sentence rendered.

I should have been mistaken in saying that these employments are neither desirable nor lucrative, as the contrary will soon be evinced. In fact, an employ of lieutenant of justice is regarded as an infallible means of making a rapid fortune. As soon as one is vacated, it is solicited with an eagerness proportioned to the advantages it promises; and it often happens

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that patronage, family connexion, or importunity, extorts from the governor a nomination, unsanctioned by his conscience. Is it the nature of man, then, that he shall always abuse his power?

To shelter the royal authority from the injuries of the cabildos, almost all the new villages are deprived of this institution, and abandoned to the rapacity of a man on whom the law has placed no restraint. Happily, the reforms which successively take place in the different branches of the Spanish administration, leave room to hope that this abuse will soon be perceived and corrected. It appears to me that this object would be in a great measure effected, by associating with these lieutenants of justice, in the judgments which they render, two persons of their district, distinguished for probity and talents; and also, that they should not take any important measures of police without the advice, in writing, of two of the most respectable citizens, whose profession should be most analogous to the object of deliberation.

Imperfect as is this institution of lieutenant of justice, it would, however, be fulfilled, in every respect according to the wish of the legislator, if they always nominated to the discharge of its functions, persons of equal understanding and integrity with him who filled this station at Victoria, fifteen leagues from Caraccas, when I passed there in 1801. Every body was loud in praise of his administration. His authority was obnoxious only to the unworthy. He enjoyed, at the same time, the esteem of his superiors, for he knew the respect due to sovereignty; and the love of those committed to his charge, for he sacri-

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ficed every thing to their tranquillity and happiness. He returned to Spain in 1803. His name, which deserves to be known, is Don Michael de Adarraga. I believe he is a Biscayan. He was, at the same time, corregidor and lieutenant-governor.

At Guayra, at Porto Cavello, and even at Coro, the military commandants exercise also the functions of lieutenants of justice; another fault which cannot long escape the vigilance of the Spanish ministry.

Other Tribunals.

There are also other tribunals of justice, which will be treated of in the chapters relating to the matters under their cognisance. It is sufficient to observe here, that the Spanish colonists, divided into privileged classes, are far from being subjected to a common jurisdiction. The executive, the military superintendant, the administrator, have each their peculiar tribunal. As these three professions are each exercised by a great part of the white population, it is evident that there are but few distinguished whites, who are subject to ordinary tribunals. These privileges are called *fueros*. As an occasion will not again present to speak of the *military fuero*, the order of my history demands that I should here give an idea of it.

Military Fuero.

At first glance, what the Spaniards calls *fuero*, appears natural and reasonable; for it permits the citizens of each profession to be judged by their com-

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peers. The object of this institution was undoubtedly laudable; but time, which alters all things, no longer allows its wisdom to be discernible. That the military *in procintu* should know no other police than that of their chiefs, nor other justice than that admitted by courts martial, appears to be incontestibly proper and well ordered; but that this privilege should extend to the militia, when not in service, to military persons who have retired, to whoever has obtained from the king the slightest distinction, and to all causes both civil and criminal, is beyond all bounds of reason and propriety.

Even the exercise of this *fuero* is not the same to every one. The private, the corporal, and the serjeant are definitively condemned, in virtue solely of the sentence of the court martial confirmed by the captain-general; while the honour and the life of all those who are not in this inferior class, are under the immediate and direct safeguard of the king.

The former are judged in a simple council of war, and the judgment, if approved by the captain-general, is executed. His approbation, however, is not definitive. He must render the papers of the process to a member of the law, who, from the nature of his functions, has the title of *auditor*. If he finds the sentence conformable to the laws, he is to declare his approbation of it, without having the power to make any change or modification. The captain-general is obliged to conform to the advice of the auditor; and his only alternative, in case he suspects fraud or deceit, or that the ordinance has been incorrectly interpreted, is to suspend the judgment, and render an accouut thereof to the king.

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The condemned, also, may appeal from the confirmed sentence. On his appeal the captain-general is bound to give all the writings of the first condemnation, to a different member of the law from him who approved the former sentence. He examines them anew, and gives his opinion under his own signature, which is submitted again to the captain-general for his approbation. This latter sentence, when approved, is definitively executed.

The formalities are much more complicated for those who are neither privates, corporals nor sergeants. Voluminous writings, swelled by numerous declarations of witnesses, serve for the basis of a process, which is judged by a council of war, and immediately forwarded to the king, to be approved by the permanent council of war at Madrid, whose functions are to judge, in the dernier resort, all cases of the *military fuero*.

Complication of Judiciary Formalities.

The forms of the Spanish tribunals are generally complicated, slow, and above all, expensive. There is no nation in the world, as I have already said in chap. iii. so addicted to litigation. All the citizens, as it respects the judiciary, may be divided into two classes; one which is ruined by chicanery, and the other which is enriched, or at least supported by it. Of judges, advocates, attornies, notaries, scriveners, alguazils and clerks, the number at Caraccas is six hundred, of whom four hundred at least are married: calculating from this account, there must be more

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than two thousand persons who live on the misery and tears of the unfortunate client.

Facility of Exceptions.

Nothing is more easy than the occurrence of errors in the Spanish legislation; nothing more common than inquests, than sworn declarations of witnesses, than exceptions to the judges. Without assigning any motive, every client may challenge three assessors of the governor. The ecclesiastical judges are privileged from challenge, unless founded on motives which are judged to be legally valid. The members of the audiences enjoy the same privilege, with this further particular, that if the motives for the challenge, are not admitted, the party is condemned to 200 dollars fine, in case the president of the audience is challenged, and 120 dollars if an oidor. These fines are applied, half to the chamber, and half to the profit of the adverse party.

By the Spanish laws a judge is forbidden to preside in causes of his father, his children, his kindred, his family, persons of his household or who dwell with him, a female whom he his desirous to marry or to take in concubinage, and all the family of such female, his capital enemy, or him whom he has maltreated, and their families.

Reflections on the Spanish Laws.

The Spanish laws, like those of every civilized nation, are admirable in theory, but subject to those

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caprices which characterize every thing framed by the hand of man. Designed to restrain the passions, to prevent injustice, to protect virtue, they do not always accomplish their object, because the magistrate to whom they should serve as a curb, often applies them to a contrary use. This is neither the fault of the king, nor of the council of the Indies. Whenever truth has the good fortune to reach them, justice and innocence triumph, even in opposition to influence and wealth. But the truth rarely extends so far: those authorities instituted by the legislator, to keep watch over each other, have so much reciprocal interest to promote, that the majority of the supreme decisions, given on false suggestions, bear with them the seal of the error on which they are founded. It is requisite to be very powerful and very rich to obtain in Spain the punishment of an abuse of power committed in the Spanish Indies. He who does not unite these advantages, must patiently submit to injustice; it would only be increased by his complainings, unless the affair can be represented to the council of the Indies. There reside penetration and impartiality.

The Spaniards have great consideration for the life of a man, and an absolute contempt for his liberty. The most atrocious crimes are required for his condemnation to death: the most trivial suspicion suffices to deprive him of his freedom. Every man who possesses the slightest degree of authority has a right to imprison him who has none. The smallest debt, whatever may be its nature, plunges into prison, the debtor who is unable to discharge it. It is true that

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if no property belonging to him can be discovered, and he makes oath that he has none, he obtains his release, after whole months of confinement. In every accusation, whether calumnious or not, they commence with imprisonment. No proof of crime is necessary for incarceration; but to obtain enlargement, innocence must furnish proof that the suspicion was unjust, and the grounds on which it originated false.

From this abusive facility of attacking personal liberty results the slight impression made upon a Spaniard by the idea of a prison. He goes to it without emotion; he writes there from morning till night to the authorities, to his patrons, and to his friends; he receives visits from all his relatives and acquaintances with the same gaiety and the same countenance, as if this abode of sorrow and humiliation were his ordinary residence. He leaves it with the same serenity; returns punctually the visits he has received, and returns to society without ranking this event in the catalogue of his misfortunes.

Armed Force.

The defence of the provinces of Venezuela, Maracaibo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the island of Margaretta, is confided to the captain-general, resident at Caraccas. The particular governors have a right to take such provisional measures as circumstances render necessary; but they must render an account of them to the captain-general, and are eventually to execute his orders. It appears, on the first

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view, that the provinces acting upon the same plan must make a defence more systematical and more efficient, than if each acted separately. This would be the fact if they were sufficiently near to render mutual assistance. But the immense distance that separates them, prohibits the union of their common forces without much difficulty and great delay. It would perhaps be equally advantageous to let each governor follow freely the impulse of his honour and his talents, instead of obliging him to wait the orders of a captain-general, distant a hundred leagues from the nearest border of the province, or to apprehend his disapprobation, if the account he must render should not appear to sufficiently justify his provisional measures.

The first attacks of an enemy upon the provinces must naturally be by sea; and, however feeble the hostile preparations may be, they must always be superior to those which protect the coasts: for the defence of which Spain has appointed only a number of small shallops, intented to prevent the contraband trade, and which a single frigate would defeat. There is then nothing to hope by sea. We will see what resistance they can oppose by land, to attacks on the sea ports; and will commence with Maracaibo.

Defence of the Sea Ports.

Maracaibo is bounded by what is at present properly called Venezuela, by the lake of the same name, and by deserts of sixty leagues in extent. These de-

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serts intervene between Maracaïbo and Truxillo, the nearest city from which it can hope for assistance; to obtain which the assent of the captain-general is also necessary, whose residence is more than a hundred leagues distant.

This city, little calculated to excite envy by the deserts which surround it, must depend on its own forces to repulse any enemy that should resolve to incur the expense its possession would cost.

Three forts defend the entrance of the harbour. The garrison consists of four companies of regular troops. The militia form five companies of whites, and four of people of colour. The population of the city amounts to twenty-five thousand persons, many of whom would contribute valiantly to its defence.

Coro, sixteen leagues east of Maracaïbo, is better protected by sterility of soil, and the poverty of its inhabitants, than it could be by the best troops. It is neither eligible as a place of conquest, nor as a point of debarkation.

The best defended harbour of the provinces under the captain-general of Caraccas is, without dispute, Porto-Cavello, fifty-five leagues to the east of Coro. A fort constructed with equal skill and solidity, situate on a small island to the north-west of the city, and provided with large and numerous artillery, constitutes its principal defence. Its fire crosses the fire of other forts situate to the west, on the east side of a large mountain. There is no permanent garrison at Porto-Cavello. The regiment of Caraccas furnishes it with one company, in time of peace, which is annually relieved. In time of war, the regular force is

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doubled, and is reinforced by the militia of Valencia and Aragoa. In case of attack all the militia would repair thither, and in less than eight days, they might collect three thousand men.

More dependence could be placed on the courage and activity of the inhabitants of Porto-Cavello than upon the militia, whose collection is always tardy, and its valour equivocal. Porto Cavello owed its deliverance, in 1643, to the Biscayans settled at that port; and, certainly, those who are there at present do not yield in zeal and in courage to their predecessors. "An English squadron," says the ecclesiastical history of Venezuela, "attacked Porto-Ca-"vello on the 27th of April, 1743, but the artillery "was so well served by the Biscayans established in "the city, that the English were repulsed, and their "vessels much damaged."

On the 22d of October, 1739, the English were foiled in an attack on Guayra, situated twenty-five leagues to the east of Porto-Cavello. This port was not then as well fortified as at the present day. Destined to protect Caraccas, from which it is only five small leagues distant, it has received such great means of defence, as the bulwark of the capital demanded. Studded with forts and batteries, it seems to defy the rashest enemy. The continual roughness of its road, so inconvenient for commerce, would be of particlular advantage to the Spaniards, in case of attack Every thing announces that with valiant troops and expert artillerists, this place would not only prevent any debarkation, but might even destroy the strongest squadron.

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Though an enemy should become master of Guayra, he would still have great obstacles to surmount before he could reach Caraccas: in particular if he attempted to proceed by the road at present used in the communication between the two cities. This road, expressly made to increase the difficulty of conquering Caraccas, crosses the summit of a mountain situated between the two cities. The whole of this space is defended, and on the height of the mountain are two forts which command the road.

The consulate of Caraccas has been desirous to construct another road, more commodious for the transportation of produce: it was even traced and commenced with such activity as to promise a speedy completion; but difficulties occurring between the engineer and the agent of the consulship, occasioned its suspension.

The military opinion pronounces that no other road can be employed, than that already in use, without endangering the safety of Caraccas; it is therefore presumable that the new road will remain a long time *en project*. Experience however has shown, that this formidable road is not the only avenue from Guayra to Caraccas. About 1594, the pirate Drake, having debarked at Guayra, proceeded to Caraccas, with a handful of men, without experiencing any resistance: the forces dispatched by that city to dispute his passage, having proceeded by the ordinary road, in the persuasion that he could only by that arrive at Caraccas. The pirate proved the contrary. He remained at Caraccas eight days, being as long as was necessary to pillage a city which had been only thirty years established.

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The city of Cumana, near a hundred leagues east of Guayra, is sufficiently difficult of access to an invading enemy. Situated a cannon shot from the sea, with its harbour half a league to leeward, it has nothing to fear but attacks under sail, which the distance would render ineffectual.

In case of debarkation, a fort, well maintained, situate on a hill in the eastern quarter of the city, would furnish much impediment. In addition to this three companies of regular troops, who compose the garrison; the militia, consisting of eleven companies of whites, two of artillery, two of cavalry, eleven of people of colour, three of black infantry, a half company of artillery; with the inhabitants of the city and its environs, would oppose to the enemy a corps exceeding 5000 men, who would courageously defend their lives, their families and their property. The English made a fruitless attempt to seize it on the 1st of October, 1741: after four hours combat they abandoned their enterprise.

The island of Margaretta, four leagues to the north of Cumma, is defended by nature, and one company of regular troops, four of white militia infantry, one of artillery, one of cavalry, and four infantry companies of people of colour. This island derives no attractions from its productions. The ungrateful soil admits no culture except of cotton, and that only in parts least cursed with sterility. But, it is perhaps desirable, as a military and commercial station.—*(See article, isle of Margaretta, in chap. X.)*

In ascending from Cumana to the east, and doubling Cape Paria to the south, no other port presents except Guiana. *(See chapter XI.)*

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All that has been said relates only to the defence of ports attacked by an enemy. But in the event of a landing on the coasts, it is sufficient to compare the extent of those coasts with the population of the provinces, to form an idea of the resistance an invading enemy would encounter. Reason, enlightened by experience, is very far from considering the forts of maritime cities essentially useful in the defence of a country. The preservation and the garrisoning of these fortresses cost immense sums in time of peace. They ought therefore, at least, to protect the country in time of war, from all insult on the part of an enemy. But the most they can effect, is to annoy and to restrain them, at a few toises distance from themselves. If a solemn convention should establish, on the part of nations, that no invasion should be attempted, but at fortified places, or if the coasts presented no other points of debarkation, we ought doubtless to keep all forts, batteries and redoubts in good condition, and well served. But upon a coast, where the ports are distant from each other sixty or a hundred leagues; where the intervals present numberless rivers, and beaches suitable for debarkation, all the heavy artillery of the sea-ports in whatever manner disposed, becomes not only useless but injurious; for it retains, as a guard, artillerists and other troops, who cannot remove, even in cases where a descent, on an isolated point of the coast may render their assistance indispensable.

By the revolution tactics has experienced, in the war which terminated the last century, the maxim

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of leaving no strong posts in the rear, has disappeared with that of providing the means of a sure retreat, previous to offering or accepting battle; and the success of the French arms has so well proved the correctness of this reform, that it has been adopted by the bravest and most experienced captains in Europe.

If this new method applies to a country like Europe, sprinkled with cities on which art has been exhausted to render them impregnable, with how much stronger reason should it be pursued in the invasion of possessions which have no fortified places but upon the shore, and those so distant from each other, that whole months are requisite for communication, even in the most favourable seasons? To attack the sea-ports is to give preference to those points where the means of defence are assembled, and where the greatest obstacles necessarily present; while in a debarkation at some distance there is nothing to be apprehended either from artillery, or from any considerable number of troops. The descent might also be protected by the vessels of the expedition, which, proceeding immediately to cruise before the ports, would attract and retain the troops, thus effecting a division of the force and consequently diminishing the resistance opposed to the invading army. Thus the enemy might penetrate into the country, every day augmenting its force with new conquests; and by cutting off the communication between the interior, and the ports already blockaded by the squadron, compel the latter to surrender at discretion, through famine, without the cost of a single cartridge.

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This mode of conquest could not be effected, in either the French or English colonies, because:

1st. The cities are all on the borders of the sea.

2d. The country, cultivating only grain and the common necessaries of life, is indebted to the cities for all those articles of sustenance, without which an European army can exist but with difficulty, and for a short time.

3. The white population, and all the troops inhabit these cities, which, situate around the island, may send forces from several points, and readily defeat an enemy who can find no supplies in the interior of the colony. In Terra Firma, on the contrary, and in almost all the Spanish possessions, the principal cities are distant from the coast and without defence. The country furnishes all kinds of provisions, fruits and grain. Numerous droves of oxen, mules, horses, sheep, &c. assure to an army supplies of every kind. It is only necessary to have good maps, plans, and guides. It is therefore obvious, that the sea-ports of the Spaniards in America, are dependent on the country for subsistence, while in the Antilles, the reverse is the fact.

These reflections may be less accurate, and less serious than I believe them; but my wishes for the prosperity of Spain, the faithful ally of my country, render me desirous that they should receive her attention. My labours will be amply compensated, if they serve as the basis for new plans, better adapted to the present state of tactics.

It is time to notice the organization of the armed force in the provinces of Caraccas.

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Organization of the armed Force.

During more than 250 years, Spain has possessed the province of Venezuela and its dependencies, without sustaining its authority with troops of the line. The governors formed bodies of guards, on pay, for interior safety; and, in time of war, reinforced them as circumstances required.

Troops of the Line.

It was only by royal regulation, dated the 6th July, 1768, that a regiment was established at Caraccas, on a military footing. It should consist, according to that regulation, of two battalions, in each eight companies, forming in the whole, 1363 men. Scarcity of cash, and difficulty of obtaining recruits, occasioned a reduction of this establishment at first to one battalion: four other companies have since been added. The regiment is therefore composed of twelve companies.

	Men.
1 Of grenadiers - - - - - -	71
11 of fusileers, in each 77 men - - - -	847
Total - - - - - - - - -	918

The service of this troop consists in the protection of Caraccas, Guayra and Porto-Cavello. Its recruits are procured from Spain, where the regiment keeps a recruiting officer. All are received who present themselves at these places

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Composition and Pay of the Regiment of Caraccas.

The company of grenadiers is composed of

		Dollars.	
1	Captain, with the monthly pay of	68	
1	Lieutenant	44	
1	Sub-Lieutenant	34	
1	First Serjeant	17	
1	Second Serjeant	15	878
1	Drummer	11	
3	First Corporals at 12 Dollars each	36	
3	Second Corporals at 11 each	33	
62	Grenadiers at 10 each	620	

Composition and Pay of each Company of Fusiliers.

		Dollars.	
1	Captain, having per month	60	
1	Lieutenant	40	
1	Sub-Lieutenant	32	
1	First Serjeant	15	
2	Second Serjeants at 13 each	26	853
2	Drummers at 10	20	
4	First Corporals at 11	44	
4	Second Corporals at 10	40	
64	Soldiers at 9	576	
10	other Companies		8530

Composition of the Etat Major, or Staff.

		Dollars.	
1	Colonel, receiving per month	218	
1	Major	97	
1	Aid-Major	51	
2	Sub-Lieutenants, at 30 dollars each	60	
1	Surgeon	40	517
1	Master Armourer	14	
1	First Fifer	12	
1	Second Fifer	10	
1	Drum-Major	15	
			10,778

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The colonel of this regiment is at the same time lieutenant of the king, and commandant of the place; and all the other officers of the *état major*, or staff, of the regiment, belong to the service of the place. The reader will not forget that Maracaibo has, separately, four companies of troops of the line; Cumana, three; Guiana, three of 50 men each; and Varinas, one of 77 men.

Artillery.

The artillery of these provinces is served, in the department of Caraccas, by one company of a hundred men; two companies of white militia; four of people of colour, and two of blacks, attached to the first.

At Cumana, one company of artillerists; Guiana, the same; and at Marcaibo, one company of militia artillerists, people of colour and blacks.

Militia.

It is a principle generally enforced in its colonies by every mother country, that all the inhabitants must unite for their internal and external safety. Exposed, by the nature of their population, to disturbance more or less serious; and, by their position and their riches, to incursions of the enemy, it would be ruinous for the colony, or for the mother country, to keep on foot a sufficiency of troops to protect the national sovereignty, at all times and in all cases, without recourse to the colonists. But, that neither cultivation not com-

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merce may be too much interrupted, the service is distinguished into ordinary and extraordinary. The first is executed by the troops of the line, or regular forces, in garrison in the cities; the second requires the whole population to take arms, to dispel any danger that may manifest itself within, or threaten from without. Hence the necessity of forming militia, organized in each colony according to the military system of its mother country.

The whole attention of Spain having been long engrossed by Peru and Mexico, it has but recently given to the provinces dependent on Caraccas, a militia so organized as to command public consideration, and so disciplined as to promise the most advantageous results. This double object has been accomplished, beyond all expectation, merely by applying to this part of Terra-Firma, the regulations of February the 19th, 1765, and January 19th, 1769: the former made for the militia of Porto-Rico, the latter for that of the island of Cuba.

This organization, so nearly approaching to that of regular troops, has flattered the ambition of all the distinguished creoles to such a degree, that there is none of them who does not feel honoured by being incorporated in it, with the title of officer. An epaulette, on which ever shoulder it may be placed, is coveted by all persons of rank. The Spanish sub-lieutenant wears the epaulette on his left shoulder, the lieutenant on his right, and the captain on both.—The superior ranks have no epaulettes: they are distinguished by gold lace on their sleeves. Two pieces of lace designate the lieutenant-colonel. The colonel has three. Opinion makes little difference between

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the honour attached to the service in the army and the militia. The Marquis del Foro, one of the most wealthy grandees of Caraccas, prides himself in being colonel of a militia battalion in the valleys of Aragoa; and Count St. Xavier, who neither yields to him in riches nor in birth, prizes no less the honour done him by the king, in 1803, in giving him command of a battalion of militia at Caraccas. It was the commencement of each in his military career.

At the slightest alarm of war, all the militia must hold themselves ready to march. They furnish detachments to reinforce the garrisons of the sea ports and of the capital.

They are constantly exercised in the management of arms The captain-general reviews, at least once a year, those in the environs of his residence; and each particular governor should discharge the same duty in his district.

The people of colour form separate corps of militia and have officers of their own colour, as high as the rank of captain: all above that rank must be white.

At Caraccas, there is one battalion of white militia, consisting of nine companies, a squadron of whites, both created in 1771, and a battalion of people of colour.

At Valencia, one battalion of white militia, composed like that of Caraccas, and another in the valleys of Aragoa. Each of these places has also a battalion of people of colour.

I have already spoken of that of Maracaibo, and of other particular governments.

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All free persons from the age of fifteen to forty-five years, are subject to militia duty. Exemption extends only to ecclesiastics, judges, advocates, notaries, agents of cities, physicians, apothecaries, surgeons, attornies, administrators of the royal treasury, the syndic of the cordeliers, sacristans and servitors of the church, pensioners, grammar and school-masters, overseers of plantations, factors of tobacco, and authorised agents of the planters in each district. But the sons, domestics, and clerks of those exempt are still liable.

Wholesale merchants, or factors of the provinces of Caraccas, are also exempt, as is likewise one clerk in each commercial house. The retail dealers have claimed the same favour; but it was refused to them by cedule of 1801.

Students, who are not of the first orders, are not exempt from the militia, if they possess the age and other requisites. None, however, are forced from their studies to take the musket.

In time of war, the militia comprises all ages. This rule is probably observed in case of invasion; I have never seen it enforced for the ordinary service of war. When the militia is in campaign, or in garrison, the officers have the same pay with those of equal rank in the troops of the line. Each sergeant of infantry has four reals per day; corporals have three each, and soldiers two. Sergeants, corporals, and privates of cavalry have the same pay with those of infantry; the subsistence of the horses being at the charge of the king.

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Cadets in the militia, as in troops of the line, must be noble. Here we perceive the true talisman of the consideration attached to the militia.

Officers of mulatto and black battalions, have the following pay while in service:

The commandant of a battalion of mulattoes has forty dollars per month; each captain thirty; lieutenants twenty-five; and each sub-lieutenant or standard bearer, twenty.

The commandant of a battalion of free blacks, has thirty-eight dollars per month; captains twenty-eight; lieutenants twenty-two; sub-lieutenants or standard bearers eighteen.

No person can wear a uniform, or cockade, unless entitled to that privilege by his employ, or military profession, under penalty of nine ducats.

Desertion to the enemy in time of war is punished with death. Absence without permission is punished with two years at the galleys.

Officers of the militia who receive no pay, may marry without permission of the king, or of their chiefs: they must only apprise the latter of their intention.

An officer of militia, who marries a female whose birth is not suited to his own, is disbanded.

Segeants, corporals, and soldiers of the militia who receive no pay, may marry without permission of their chiefs.

No military man can be obliged against his will to make one of the cabildos, to act as a guardian, or as a sequestrator.

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View of the armed Force of the Provinces under the Captain General of Caraccas.

CARACCAS AND ITS ENVIRONS.

Caraccas.—*Troops of the Line.*

		Men.	
1	Company grenadiers	71	918
11	Do. fusileers, 77 each	847	

Artillery.

1	Company	100	900
2	Do. white militia	200	
4	Do. people of colour	400	
2	Do. blacks attached to the first	200	

Militia.

1	Battalion of whites, 9 companies	810	1630
1	Squadron, blacks and company	100	
1	Battalion, people of colour	720	

Valencia.—*Militia.*

1	Battalion, whites, 9 companies	810	1530
1	Do. people of colour	720	

Valleys of Aragoa.—*Militia.*

1	Battalion of whites	810	1530
1	Do. people of colour	720	

San-Carlos.—*Militia.*

1	Company of cavalry	50

Cumana.—*Troops of the Line.*

3	Companies	221

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Brought forward, - - - - - -		6779

Artillery.

1 Company of Artillerists - - - - -	100	450
2 Ditto, white militia - - - - -	200	
1 ½ Ditto, people of colour - - -	150	

Militia.

12 Companies, whites - - - - -	1080	2245
2 Ditto, of cavalry, do. - - - - -	100	
11 Ditto, of people of colour - -	990	
1 ½ Ditto, of cavalry - - - - -	75	

Maracaibo—*Troops of the Line.*

4 Companies - - - - - - - - -	308

Artillery.

1 Company, people of colour - - - - -	100

Militia.

5 Companies of whites - - - - -	450	810
4 Ditto, of people of colour - - -	360	

Guiana.—*Troops of the Line.*

3 Companies of 50 men - - - - -	150

Artillery.

1 Company of Artillerists - - - -	100

Militia.

4 Companies of whites - - - - -	360	870
1 Ditto, cavalry - - - - - - -	150	
4 Companies of infantry, people of colour -	360	
		11812

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Brought forward, - - - - - - - -		11812

Isle of Margaretta.—*Troops of the Line.*

1 Company - - - - - - - - -		77

Artillery.

4 Companies of people of colour - - - - -		400

Militia.

4 Companies of whites - - - - -	360	770
1 Ditto, cavalry - - - - - -	50	
4 Ditto, infantry, people of colour - -	360	
Total, - - - - - - - - - -		13059

Note. There has been an addition, since 1804, of one company of troops of the line, at Varinas, consisting of 77 men.

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CHAPTER VI.

OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.

Tribunals of Inquisition—Their privileges—First grants of the Popes—Limits of their powers—Royal patronage—Exercise of this right—Bishopricks—Annuities—Oath of the bishops—Ecclesiastical tribunals—Their privileges—Chapters—Curates—Eulogium of the French curates—Classification of the curates—Curate rectors—Curates doctrinal—Missions—Missions of Piritu—Of Cumana—Of Venezuela—Other missions—Merit of the first Missionaries—Cooling of the original zeal—Actual missionaries—Appointment of missionaries—Riches of the Catalan capuchins of Guiana—Eulogium of the missionary Fabara—Secular priests—Convents—Pious donations—Prebends—Monks—Temples—Asylums—Their origin—Inconstancy of their legislature—Abolished in France—Abolished in England—Maintained in Spain—Reduction of the asylums—Legislation of the asylums—The asylums injurious to the law—They shackle the operations of the law—They promote assassination—They must soon be abolished.

THE catholic, apostolic, and roman religion, is not only predominant, but exclusive, in all the Spanish possessions, as in the mother country. The schismatic, or the person who is even suspected of being such, passes a very uncomfortable time there.

Tribunals of the Inquisition.

Three tribunals of the inquisition, or holy office, which have their sessions at Mexico, Lima, and Carthagena of the Indies, are inexorable defenders of the faith in all Spanish America.

Their Privileges.

In their primitive institution, their cognisance was confined to matters strictly of heresy. *Inquisitores non possunt se intermittere in aliis, causis quam in delictis contra fidem. Clem. de hæres. cap. mult. prim. parag. propter.* The law soon assigned to them cases of

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divorce, polygamy and sodomy, which it has since successively referred to other tribunals.

The abuse that a priest may make of confession, by rendering it subservient to his passions, comes under the cognizance of the inquisitors. As in this case it is necessary to proceed against the priest on a denunciation not supported by proofs, the least appearance of rancour, hatred, or vengeance, occasions its rejection. Nothing is admitted except merely the denunciation, accompanied with the circumstances which render the crime probable.

These tribunals can condemn to fine, confiscation, banishment, the galleys or the flames. The secular judges, even the audiences, must respect their sentences, and cause them to be executed. The principal functions of these inquisitorial tribunals consist in anathematizing all books the contents of which wound the tenets of religion, offend modesty, or tend to deprive government of its consideration, and the laws of that respect which is their due.

Such is the vigilance of the inquisition that this regulation concerning the police of books, is more rigorously executed both in Europe and America, than any other regulation appertaining to the Spanish regime.

From whatever part books may come, in whatever language they may be written, neither the entrance, circulation, nor use, are permitted, until they have been pronounced orthodox by the commissaries of the holy office.

Every bookseller in the Spanish dominions is bound to furnish, in the two first months of every year, an

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inventory of the books he exposes for sale: to this must be subscribed his oath that he has no others than those contained in the inventory.

He is forbidden to purchase or sell any book prohibited by the inquisition, under penalty, for the first offence, of interdiction from all commerce in books for two years, banishment during the same term, to twelve leagues distance from the place in which he was established, and a fine of two hundred ducats to the profit of the inquisitition. Repetitions of the offence are proportionally punished. The book forming the substance of the crime may have been already sold, and in the hands of a third person, but the declaration of the purchaser suffices to subject the bookseller to all penalties specified.

Every bookseller must have in his store a catalogue of the books censured by the inquisition, under penalty of forty ducats. It is even necessary that the catalogue should be his own; for if it be borrowed he is equally liable to the fine as if he have none.

No bookseller may proceed to the inventory, estimate, purchase, or sale of private libraries, without furnishing to the commissary of the inquisition, a statement, containing the names and surnames of the authors, the titles of the books, the subject matter, and the place and year of the impression, under penalty of fifty ducats.

Every person who enters the country with books, must make a declaration detailed and sworn to, which is sent to the tribunal of the inquisition or its commissaries, who have the power to permit their intro-

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duction or to seize them. The omission, or imperfect execution of this declaration, occasions a confiscation of the books, and a cost of 200 ducats for the expenses of the holy office.

When books, as most frequently happens, are deposited at the custom-house, with other effects, or merchandise, the officers of the customs cannot release the books, but by express permission of the commissary of the inquisition: which he does not grant till he was previously examined them.

Catalogues which Spaniards may receive from abroad for the selection of books, must, before any use is made of them, be sent to the holy-office, which may retain or restore them.

Whoever may have the temerity to elude the vigilance of the inquisition is not therefore in peaceable possession of the proscribed books he has received. He remains exposed to those domiciliary visits which the commissioners of the inquisition have a right to make at any hour either of day or night.

The tribunal of the holy inquisition, can grant particular permissions to read prohibited books. This is frequently done to persons whose manners are unequivocally national, and whose principles are steadfast and unalterable. The priests and monks most readily obtain these permissions; but they do not extend to all the books prohibited. Some are so strictly forbidden that neither the inquisition nor the pope permit them to be read, except in cases extremely rare.

Formerly it sufficed for a book to contain a single proposition of questionable orthodoxy, a single equi-

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vocal maxim, to provoke its entire prohibition. At present it is thought sufficient to suppress the vicious or suspected part. This operation is called *expurgar*, (purifier.) In this case, they obliterate the offensive passages of the book, and with those exceptions, permit it to be reprinted or read.

But when the basis of its principle appears impious, scandalous, or obscene, the whole work is condemned; and according to the importance of its injurious tendencies, it remains interdicted, even to those who have the privilege of reading prohibited books. Thus the books on which the holy inquisition has exercised its authority, may de divided into three classes, viz. *corrected* books, which become national; *forbidden* books, which may be read on permission; and *proscribed* books, which cannot be read without a special permission.

The French works condemned to an absolute proscription are: *The New Abelard; Academy of the Ladies; the Year Two Thousand Four Hundred and Forty; Philosophy of Good Sense; Discourse of the Emperor Julian against the Christians; Political Maxims of Paul III. Bayle's Dictionary; Portable Theology of the Abbe Bernier;** *the Continuation of Bossuet's Universal History; Theory of Criminal Laws, by* Brissot de Warville; *Religious Ceremonies and Customs; the six last volumes of a Course of Study, by* Condillac; *Dialogues drawn from Monialisme*, or the Principles of Nunneries; *Treatise* on Virtues and Recompences; *Instructive Errors; Journal of the*

* The Baron de Holbach, under the name of Abbe Bernier.

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Reign of Henry IV. King of France; Military Philosophy; Genius of Montesquieui; Literary History of the Troubadours; Philosophical and Political History, by the Abbe Raynal; *Belisarius,* by Marmontel; *Memoirs and Adventures of a Man of Quality; Nature,* by Robint; *Researches concerning the Americans; System of Nature; Social System; Voltaire's Works; Rousseau's Works; Essay on Universal History,* by Jean de Antimoine; *History of Prince Basile; History and life of Aretin; Monuments of the Private Lives of the Twelve Cæsars, &c. &c.*

That the prohibition of books may be public and notorious, the tribunal of the inquisition directs at intervals, a catalogue to be printed of those, the reading of which is forbidden, under penalty of fine and censure. In the three first centuries of its establishment, the inquisition contented itself with declaring heterodox a strange work found in the hands of the citizens, and at the same time punished the offence, which ignorance had occasioned. On the 30th of June, 1640, the inquisitor-general, Antoine de Soto mayor published a mandate, announcing to the faithful such books as were proscribed by the inquisition. Their number was very reduced. It consisted only of the works of Æcolampadiu, Luther, Erasmus, Pelican, Zuinglius, Munster, Castalius, &c. condemned as much for their works, as for the alterations made of the holy scriptures.

In 1707 and 1747, the inquisitors general ordained more strongly the execution of the mandate of 1640, and added new regulations to the preceding.

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But, properly speaking, it was not till 1789, that this department of inquisitorial duties received the order and perfection of which it was susceptible. The inquisitor-general, Don Augustin Rubin De Ceballos ordained, the 26th of December, 1789, the impression of a new catalogue more exact than the preceding and with the distinction of books corrected, forbidden, and proscribed. At the head of the catalogue are the rules, which never before existed or were published, according to which the works are to be judged by the inquisition.

Agreeably to these rules, every book which contains only a few scattered and accidental propositions of heresy, is allowed on a retrenchment of the tainted parts.

But every work written by a heretic, or which treats, in common language, of matters in controversy between the catholics and modern heretics, is entirely prohibited.

Whatever may be the subject of a book, if it do not announce the author, the printer, the date and place of its impression, it is, by that single circumstance, prohibited.

Every work that treats only of love, of magic, of witchcraft, or of superstition, is deservedly condemned.

The Talmud and all the books of the Rabbins and Hebrews, and the confutations of the alcoran are comprised in the absolute prohibition.

Nothing evinces more clearly the zeal of the inquisition, than the number of works it has condemned

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within two centuries. The catalogue of prohibited books, printed in 1790, contains the names and surnames of five thousand four hundred and twenty authors, reprobated by the tribunal; not to mention the infinity of anonymous productions which have experienced the same fate.

Spain is so attentive to preserve her religious and political principles in all their purity, that she repulses from her bosom whatever may conduce to their injury. To this effect the inquisition has set the seal of its reprobation, not only on the works of Servet, Bayle, Voltaire, Rousseau, Raynal and all those who have written in defence of the doctrines of Mahomet, Luther, Calvin, &c. but also on the productions of the Abbe Racine, Masson, Morvillers, Fleuron, Addison, Arnaud, the Marquis d'Argenson, Beccaria, Marmontel for his *Belisarius*, Abbe Bernier, Baron De Bieldfield, Count De Bonneval, Bosinet, Nicolas Boileau, Despreaux, Tycho-Brahe, La Fontaine, La Bruyere, Burlamaqui, Ganganelli, Condillac, Montesquieu, *Robinson Crusoe*, Desormaux, Lacombe, Prezel, La Croix de Compeigne, Diderot, Helvetius, Fontenelle, Dufrene, Francheville for the *Age of Louis XIV.* Hubner, Hume, Count D'Oxenstien, Puffendorf, Robert for his Universal Geography, Vattel, Filangieri, Millot, Abbe De Mably, Dupaty for his *Letters on Italy*, Fenelon, &c. &c.

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Commissaries.

The inquisition nominates, in all the cities within the district of the tribunal, commissaries without jurisdiction. They furnish information on every affair denounced to them, and send the process and the accused, to the tribunal.

Appointments.

The appointments or salaries of the members of the inquisition are paid from the fines and confiscations imposed by that tribunal, and from the proceeds of a place of canon, which is left vacant in each cathedral for that purpose. When all these are not sufficient, the royal coffers furnish the deficiency.

Popes.

Notwithstanding the purity of religious worship in the Spanish colonies; notwithstanding the fervor of the faithful, and the empire of true belief, the pope has no direct influence there. They believe, however, in his infallibility, in his sanctity, in the virtue of his indulgencies, in the validity of his dispensations &c. but things have been so disposed, that the pontifical authority cannot penetrate there, excepting through the prism of royal authority.

First Concessions of the Popes.

Alexander VI. by his bulls of 1493 and 1501, transmitted to Ferdinand and Isabella the direct and

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useful domain of America. It is in virtue of these bulls, supported by force, that the kings of Spain have conquered, and preserved all their possessions in the West Indies.

These bulls derived all their importance from the opinion of the age; which regarded the court of Rome as the secretaryship of the divinity. Extraordinary as they appear to us at the present day, particularly the former, they were equally of service to the Spanish kings in establishing their sovereignty in the new world; in repulsing from their transatlantic posessions, the jurisdictions which the popes might have wished to exercise there; and in furnishing a motive for obtaining other bulls more positive and extensive: leaving the pope no power to do any thing in America but what was sanctioned by royal approbation.

Limits of the powers of the Popes.

The holy see can communicate directly with the Spanish Indies, only in reserved cases. These relations are rare, since the bishops enjoy a more extensive right of absolution here, than in Europe. All other pontifical acts, as briefs, bulls, dispensations, indulgencies, &c. must be sent from Rome to the king of Spain, who has committed their examination, exclusively to the council of the Indies. This council determines whether or not their execution would productive of evil, and directs or forbids it, according as it appears advantageous, injurious, or indifferent to the system of the colonies.

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Spanish policy has thus reduced the pontifical authority, for the purpose of increasing that of the king; which has become in the Spanish Indies the centre of power and the source of every favour, of every employ either civil or ecclesiastic. The consequence is, that whatever profession a Spaniard embraces, his hopes are all dependent on the king. From the lowest officer to the viceroy, from the door-keeper to the chiefs of justice, from the meanest clerk of the administration to the intendant, from the porter of a cathedral to a bishop, all are nominated by the king. In the distribution of this infinity of employs, of dignities and honours, consists the grand bulwark of the royal power in America.

Royal Patronage.

The right of patronage appertains exclusively to the king. It has been conferred on him by bulls of the popes, particularly that of Julius II. in 1508; and what more completely invests him with this right is, that the discovery of the new world, the propagation of the faith, the founding of cities and villages, the erecting and supporting of churches, are works solely of the crown, or more correctly speaking, are established at the expence of the royal treasury.

According to this permanent right, no cathedral nor parish church, no monastery nor hospital can be founded in America, without express and direct permission from the king.

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Exercise of this Right.

The archbishops, bishops and abbes are nominated by the pope, but on the particular and spontaneous presentation of the king. Truth requires that I should bear honourable testimony to the wisdom and justice which presides at those appointments. In Spain, the priest, whether born in obscurity, or of illustrious descent, the monk and the secular, are equally eligible to religious promotion. Superior talents or information joined to an exemplary deportment, are generally the qualifications which entitle to preference. It is true, however, that favouritism has often an influence in these nominations. I agree that the saint, ambitious of no honours, will experience little trouble in avoiding those of the episcopacy; yet it is equally certain, that solicitations are ever fruitless, when the candidate has no other merit than that of patronage. We find no Spanish bishop who is not a good theologist, who does not lead an exemplary life, who does not reside constantly in his bishopric, who does not share his revenue with the poor of his diocese, in a word, who is not a true patriarch in the bosom of his numerous family.

The canonries in the Spanish possessions, are given only to persons chosen by the king, who is extremely attentive in bestowing these elections solely on merit. In fact, as these places require more assiduity than motion, as they lead more to a sedentary then an active life, they are almost always the recompence of aged curates, who have discharged with zeal the laborious ministry of their parishes. I have

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never seen one of this venerable class who drew from his revenue more then was indispensably necessary, and who did not divide the surplus among his relations and the indigent.

No person in the Spanish possessions can possess, at the same time, two benefices, two dignities, or two prebends. The bishops are charged to render to the king an account of the vacant benefices in their dioceses, of the rents attached thereto, and of the individuals most worthy of obtaining them. The candidates must address themselves to the viceroys or governors, and present to them their petitions, accompanied with all their recommendatory vouchers, even the opinion of the prelate. The viceroys or governors forward them all to the minister, and from the examination of these documents results the nomination or refusal.

The nomination of curates is also, in the Spanish Indies, a royal right, exercised on the spot by representatives of the king. They hold an assembly which lasts for a month. The bishop proposes three persons whom he judges most worthy, and from this list the governors select.

Deference to the bishop has introduced the custom of always nominating the candidate whose name is first on the list. This, which at first was merely a habit, in the lapse of time became regarded as a law. In 1770, the governor-general of Caraccas would have departed from this order. He nominated to the curacy the third on the presented list. But the contrary usage had taken too strong root to be overturned so easily. Bishop Marti complained loudly

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thereof to the king, who rendered an edict confirming the nomination made by the governor; but ordaining that henceforth the governors should nominate as curate the first candidate on the list presented by the bishop, unless he had strong reasons to the contrary; in which case he should confer with the bishop, and arrange the nomination with him. Creole priests are preferred to Europeans for the curacies; and those who understand the Indian languages for doctrinal curacies (*doctrinaires*). No priest who is not born in Spain or Spanish America, can possess any benefice, unless he obtains letters of naturalization from the prince.

All difficulties which arise on exercising the royal patronage are carried, of course, before the council of the Indies, which regulates all matters of religion; so that no other right remains to the pope, but that of granting the bulls which they request, and deciding on cases of conscience which they submit to him.

It is superfluous to prolong this article relative to the royal patronage. The remainder of its rights will naturally be discussed in the examination of the ecclesiastical organization.

Bishops.

There are three bishoprics in the jurisdiction of the captain-generalship of Caraccas. The first, originally established at Coro, was transferred, in 1636, to Caraccas. The particulars of this transfer are found in the description of the city of Caraccas. The second, established in 1777, at

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Merida de Maracaïbo, has, for diocese, the dismemberments which have been made from the western parts of the bishopric of Caraccas, and the northern part of the archbishopric of Santa Fé, which for civil goverment depends on the viceroy of the new kingdom of Grenada. The third is at St. Thomas de Guiana, formed in 1790, of the immense province of Guiana, the province of Cumana, and the island of Margaretta. The island of Trinidad, ceded to the English by the treaty of Amiens, made also a part of this bishopric, which is a dismemberment of that of Porto Rico.

The bishopric of Merida is suffragan of Santa Fé. Those of Caraccas and Guiana have not had a metropolitan since the seat of the archbishopric of St. Domingo ceased to exist by the cession of that part of the isle to France until 1803, when the cathedral of Caraccas was constituted metropolitan, having for suffragans the bishoprics of Merida and Guiana, as is remarked under the article of *Caraccas*, chap. X.

The revenues of the bishops arise from tithes. The king to whom they appertain, deducts two ninths from the moiety, and abandons the rest to the ministers of the gospel. The bishop has a fourth part of the whole. In some years, this quota has yielded the bishop of Caraccas seventy thousand dollars. This revenue, however, being subjected to the vicissitudes of agriculture, and the price of necessaries, has been reduced, during the present war, to less than forty thousand dollars; and many years of peace are evidently necessary to render it equally lucrative as before the war. The bishop of Merida's

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revenue is about one fourth of that of the bishop of Caraccas. In the bishopric of Guiana the king has always gathered the tithes, and paid, from his coffers, the salary of the bishop, fixed at four thousand dollars. From circumstances, however, it is probable the latter will soon participate in the tithes; when his revenue will amount to ten or twelve thousand dollars.

Annuities.

The bishops render to the king, in his character of patron of the Indies, their first year's revenue. Formerly they paid only a twelfth part, under the name of *annats*, or first fruits. But they were eventually taxed, like all the other benefices, to pay one year entire, under the name of *annuidad*, annuity. The only mitigation they have been able to obtain is that of paying it in six annual instalments.

Oath of the Bishops.

The first obligation of an elected bishop is to make oath before a notary, that he will respect in all points the royal patronage; that he will oppose no obstacles to the full exercise of the rights which it gives, or to the collecting of the products dependent thereon. Whatever orders the titular may bring, he cannot be put in possession of the bishopric, unless he presents a certificate of this oath.

The laws of Spain, less accommodating on this article than those of France, forbid that any bishop

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should enjoy the revenues of his bishopric, unless he reside personally in his diocese.

Ecclesiastical Tribunals.

Each bishop has his proper tribunal, which is called *ecclesiastical.* It is composed of the bishop himself, the fiscal proctor and the provisor.

All ordinary sentences are rendered by the provisor; the bishop only judges in causes of importance, or that interest ecclesiastical personages, such as canons.

Appeals from these sentences are rendered to the archbishop. If the appellant succeeds, the party condemned may appeal to the nearest bishop, and the judgment of this third tribunal receives definitive execution. If the appellant is condemned at the metropolitan tribunal, he cannot appeal anew.

Their Privileges.

The constitution of these tribunals is similar to that of our ancient officialities, (*bishops' courts*) though they have more privileges than the latter, which, since the ordinance of 1539, have scarcely any cognizance, except in actions on promise or dissolution of marriage. It must be granted at the same time, that the Spanish ecclesiastical tribunals have likewise suffered great reductions in their jurisdictions. There even exists between these and the civil tribunals, a contest in which the former have rarely the advantage.

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The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunals embraces all causes of a spiritual nature, and all matters connected with them—such as orders, benefices, patronages, tithes, marriages, legitimations and funerals. The secular tribunals, according to Acevedo, have cognizance under the royal patronage, although the question should be between ecclesiastics, or against them.

Although the ecclesiastical tribunals have cognizance, even against the laity, on questions whether tithes are due, yet the secular tribunals are competent to decide in disputes concerning their payment, or their recovery; because these species of causes are called *mixti fori.* I speak here only of tithes appertaining to the churches: when they appertain to the laity, the secular tribunals decide both on the right and on the fact.

The portions of nuns, donations to churches or any other sacred places, and to other pious uses are in the province of the ecclesiastical tribunals. But the demands of churches, monasteries or priests, for rents, *juros*, alms, gages, rights and other favours or privileges of the king, and also which are not by way of deed or vassalage, should be carried before the secular tribunals, as much for the right as for the fact.

The ecclesiastical tribunals, have also cognizance of pious legacies made to churches by contracts between the living, or by last will; either for the repose of the soul, the redemption of captives, or other objects of a similar nature. They have also the right of executing testaments in all their parts, in cases

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where the executor does not fulfil the will of the testator within a year, or sooner if in his power, even though the testator should have signified a contrary will. When these causes are between the laity, the secular tribunals have also jurisdiction over them, because they are *mixti fori*.

The jurisdiction of civil and temporal causes, between priests, as well as those wherein a layman pleads against a priest, belongs to the ecclesiastical tribunals. But if the priest is plaintiff the cause is carried before the secular tribunal.

The priest administering on effects not belonging to the king or his council, is prosecuted before his proper tribunal.

A guardianship given by a lay-minor to a priest, should be discussed before the secular tribunal; and that of a minor priest given to a layman, should be brought before an ecclesiastical tribunal to which should also be rendered an account of the guardianship.

Finally, the ecclesiastical tribunals rank among their prerogatives the defence and preservation of the immunities of the churches, known by the name of *asylums*; of which I shall treat, before I conclude this chapter.

The process of the ecclesiastical court is subject to the same forms as that of the secular. Their judgments are said to be less slow and expensive. That however does not prevent them from multiplying writings, from perplexing the clearest affairs, from consuming abundance of stamped paper, and from fleecing the unfortunate clients. By what fatality

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does it happen, that all human affairs are thus subject to abuse? The question conveys its own answer—they are human.

Chapters.

The chief place of each bishopric has a chapter, of which the number of members is always proportioned to the revenues of the diocese. That of Caraccas, being the richest, possesses also the most numerous chapter. During one hundred and four years that the seat of the bishopric was at Coro, it had no other canons than a dean and a chapter. In proportion as the tithes were augmented their number increased, so that at present the chapter of Caraccas counts for its members, a dean, a sub-dean, a chapter, a preceptoral prebendary, a treasurer, a magisterial prebendary, a doctoral, a penitentiary, a prebendary of favour, and six prebendaries, of whom three are demi-proportionaries.

The chapter of Merida, less numerous than that of Caraccas, would nevertheless have been still less so, had it followed the same rule of proportioning its number to its revenue. Its rents do not exceed the fourth of those of the chapter Caraccas, yet it is composed of a dean, one doctoral, one magisterial, two prebendaries of favour, and two other prebends.

The bishopric of Guiana has a chapter of only two canons, to each of whom the king pays annually, from his coffers, six hundred dollars. If the revenues of the bishop come to be assigned on tithes, this new chapter will doubtless receive also its part, and

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like those of Caraccas and Merida, will acquire new members, in proportion as it acquires new rents to support them.

Curates.

After the bishops and chapters naturally follows this class of pastors, so useful when their deportment and vigilance respond to the august object of their functions; and so injurious, when they abuse the consideration, the respect and the confidence which their sacerdotal character inspires. God forbid that I should refuse to the generality of Spanish curates all the virtues of their station, or withhold from them those eulogiums, merited by the indefatigable zeal with which, day and night they administer their spiritual succours. They all appeared to me to possess in an eminent degree every pastoral quality. I acknowledge that I know very little of the particulars of their administration; but, however perfect it may be, it cannot excel that of our French curates. The religious reader will not perhaps be displeased if I here give a sketch of them.

Eulogium of the French Curates.

The French curates have always taken for the basis of their actions, the maxim that the sheep are not for made the pastor, but the pastor for the sheep. From thence, is naturally derived the obligation to watch over their preservation and sacrifice every thing to their happiness.

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Convinced that example is more eloquent than the most studied precepts, they commence by regulating their own lives according to the model which they propose to their parishioners. Far from coldly confining their cares to spiritual things, they on the contrary extend them to every department of civil life, where their influence may prove useful. They become, at the same time, the pontiffs, the fathers, the protectors and the administrators of their parishes.—The laws receive equal succour from them, with religion, since, in being priests they do not forget that they are citizens. Forbidden all coercive means, they have, like the saviour of the world, no other arms than persuasion, no other authority than gentleness. They study, above all, to conciliate the practice of the christian with the social virtues.—They rank labour among the highest duties imposed on man by his creator. The slothful, the idler and the vagrant, are equally reprehensible in their eyes, with those who directly violate the duties of religion. Instead of multiplying religious ceremonies, and allowing superstition to take root, which converts the best of christians into an insupportable fanatic, they confine themselves to enforcing those religious fetes, which are strictly enjoined. Every one employs all other days, all other moments, in procuring the comforts of life, in fulfilling his task in society, and in contributing to the public prosperity. No person is entitled to the alms of the pastor but the infirm, the aged, and the orphan. This is but an inconsiderable part of the good which has always been, and still is performed by the respectable French Curates, for the

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happiness of their parishioners. The peace, tranquillity and concord of families are also the serious objects of their cares. Domestic quarrels are, by their mediation, appeased as soon as known. The hatred which interest or passion often produces between citizens, yields to the indefatigable cares of these pastors, and is terminated by sincere reconciliations: chicanery finds in them the most inveterate enemies. How often have they drawn citizens into a happy understanding, when they were about commencing or perhaps had already commenced, a process, the delays and expenses of which would probably have produced the ruin and misery of all parties! There is a certain emulation among the curates, on this point, which causes them to consider as a good deed, every process which they have prevented or destroyed. Such men are doubtless worthy of public veneration; and in effect they enjoy it so fully, that they are more frequently regarded as tutelar angels than as public functionaries.

Classification of the Curates.

The care of souls is confided, in the Spanish Indies, to rectoral curates, doctrinal curates, and missionaries. The first are those who officiate in parishes, where the Spanish population predominates. The second, those who exercise curial functions in the Indian villages. The third, those who catechise the Indians, and instruct them in the rudiments of the social life.

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The functions of rectoral and doctrinal curates are nearly the same. The latter are merely enjoined to much more assiduity in the instruction of the Indians. In this consists the difference of their recompences and emoluments.

Rectoral Curates.

The rectoral curates have a right to the amount of the tithes which remains, after deducting one fourth for the bishop, another fourth for the chapter, and two ninths which appertain to the king. The part which accrued to the lower clergy was divided among the curates of the towns. The curates successively established in other places were excluded from a participation. They complained thereof; and, as might be expected, supported their complaints with peremptory motives. The king decided, that the part of the tithes destined to this use should be sequestrated until the pretensions of the new curates were adjusted. Ten years have elapsed since this order was executed, and the rectoral curates reduced to their perquisites; which, in fact, are more considerable in the Spanish colonies, than in any other part of the christian world.

Doctrinal Curates.

The doctrinal curates have much fewer perquisites, because they are forbidden to take any thing for the marriages, baptisms and interments of Indians. The king allowed them, as a compensation, the annual

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sum of 183 dollars, according to the laws of the Indies; but, by a subsequent law, a new settlement is made, proportioned to the importance of the village. Besides the first fruits, they collect tithes on grain and vegetables. To this order of curates the missionaries transfer such Indians as have already received the principles of civilization.

Missions.

The idea of making the conquest of America a species of crusade, was greatly owing to the right which Spain had received from the court of Rome, of uniting the new world to its dominions, for the purpose of establishing christianity therein. The bull of concession of 1493 was founded on this motive. Every invasion was believed legitimate, when the cross was borne beside the royal standard. "Become a christian or die," said they to the Indian, "and thou canst not be one, without despoiling thyself of thy liberty and effects, in favour of those "who procure thee this blessing." This moral, or rather, this abuse of "the right of the strongest," produced the greatest violences; until at length the Spanish kings, informed of the outrages perpetrated in their name, and without their knowledge, wisely determined to confide the conversion of the Indians to more suitable persons. To them who had couarge sufficient to scatter the seeds of faith on a soil which perhaps might be sprinkled with their blood; who had sufficient contempt for the riches of this world to content themselves with the recompence promised

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in another; to such as propagate or die for the faith; who had sufficient talents and patience to draw the Indian from the habitudes of a savage life, to make him prefer a residence in villages to a residence in woods, and the duties of society to the rights of independence; who had sufficient vigour to brave the inclemency of the seasons, and the insalubrity of ailment. All these virtues, all these qualities have shone beyond belief in the missionaries employed by the Spaniards in the new world. This measure was put in practice at St. Domingo nearly at the moment that the Spaniards arrived there; but we must not judge of its goodness from the effects it produced at that place. The total extermination of the Indians in that island seemed to be the wish of the apostle, as well as of the conqueror. In other parts, subjugated by the Spaniards, the missionaries were not introduced until after the government, wishing to avoid a further effusion of blood, renounced the use of arms in aggrandizing the Spanish sovereignty. I have already said and demonstrated, that all the principal cities at present existing within the district of the captain-general of Caraccas, were founded and peopled by force of arms alone. With the exception of two weak and unfortunate missions to Cumana, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, which were immediately exterminated, the milder measures of christian morality were not exclusively employed, until towards the middle of the seventeenth century.

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Mission of Piritu.

The *projet* of establishing missions in Terra-Firma was conceived by Francis Rodrigue Leyta, an inhabitant of St. Cristoval des Cumanagotas in the province of Cumana.

He communicated the plan in 1648 to Don Lopez de Aro, bishop of Porto Rico, who found it worthy of being proposed to the king of Spain. The death of this prelate was a great detriment to the celerity of its success. The bishop, however, who succeeded him, declared in favor of the project, and made such representations as determined the king to suspend, by cedule of 1652, all military expeditions against the Indians of the province of Cumana. At the same time, by command of the king, an envoy was dispatched, consisting of eight missionaries of the order of St. Francis, at the head of whom was father Jean de Mendoza, equally commendable for his deportment, as for his talents.

These missionaries landed at Cumana, the 8th of May, 1656. They chose as the scene of their apostolic labors that part called *Piritu*, which is on the coast beside the rivers Unaca and Barcelona. The reduction of the Indians who occupy this territory was the more difficult, from having been attempted for a long time; and the more important, since it would open between the province of Venezuela and that of Barcelona, a communication which these Indians rendered impracticable. This enterprise cost the missionaries but a few months of privation and

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fatigue. Before the expiration of a year, they founded the village of la Conception de Piritu. Their success was every day more evident. By dint of trouble and perseverance, they inspired the savages with a relish for the sweets of social life, and inscribed on the grand list of subjects of the king of Spain men who had until then been the most cruel enemies of his authority.

After having removed from this part of the coast all the dangers to which the Spaniards were exposed, the ever fervent zeal of these apostles induced them to penetrate farther into the interior than any mission had ever proceeded. Gaining ground foot by foot, they have passed the Oronoko, leaving behind them none but men converted to social life, and they have reached the Rio-Negro (Black River) where they labour at the present day. The tract which they occupy is more than five hundred leagues.—This mission, like all others, has consumed an infinity of missionaries, who successively came, and still come from Spain.

Mission of Cumana.

Nearly at the same epoch that the mission of Franciscans was established at Piritu, another arrived from Spain, destined for the province of Cumana, composed of Arragonian capuchins, who had already passed two years at Piritu, (1651—1652) from whence they had been recalled to Spain on complaints made by the council of the Indies. These

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complaints being proved unfounded, and their innocence established, they were sent back to their functions, and the province of Cumana assigned to them. Their ministry was the more useful here, since conquest had made but little progress in these parts, and the Spaniards possessed scarcely any other territory than the mere environs of the city of Cumana. By the cares of these missionaries, several villages were founded. All the plain ceded gradually to their morals. The mountains, less accessible, opposed obstacles to their progress which are not yet surmounted. It is always the province, or rather, kingdom of Arragon which furnishes this mission with the requisite members.

Mission of Venezuela.

The example and success of the two missions, just mentioned, animated several capuchins with a holy zeal, who repaired to the province of Venezuela, to preach there the gospel, under the direction of father Caravantes. They formed missions to Caraccas, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Nirgua, Tocuyo, Carora, Truxillo, Tocuyo on the coast, Maracaibo, Guayra, La Victoria, San Matheo, Cagua, Tulmero, Quibon and Quara. They flocked there from all parts. Many Indians even, attracted by the singularity of the sight, abandoned their savage life to participate in the advantages of christianity.

The chapter of Caraccas, which then governed the vacant bishopric, judged by the advantage re-

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sulting from these pious exercises, of those which would be produced by missions in constant activity; they therefore requested from the king a supply of missionaries, for the conversion of those multitudes of Indians who in that province had defied all military effort, and maintained their own independence. This request was granted by cedule of 21st May, 1658. Six capuchins of the province of Arragon were sent to Caraccas. The effects of their zeal surpassed the most flattering expectations. The whole province had been covered with savage and ferocious Indians, who prevented all communication between the principal cities, unless by a circuitous route, or an armed force. The fruitless efforts employed to reduce them, had only augmented their love for a savage life, and their hatred to the Spaniards. The resignation of these new missionaries, their morality, and their exemplary lives, soon effected that desirable object which government, with all its expedients had been unable to accomplish during a century and a half. Several, as well of the first missionaries, as those who succeeded them, fell victims to their barbarous proselytes; but they only had their blood to shed, and, in devoting themselves to this enterprise, they had made an offering of it to God and the king.

To these venerable men must be ascribed the conversion and even the civilization of the Goamos, Atatures, Cucaros, Guarivos, Chiricoas, Goaranoas, Otomacos, Amaibos, Zaruros, Chirigas, Atapaimas, Dazaros, Cherrechennes, Zaparipas, Goaigoas, Guires, Gayones, Achaguas, Guayquiris,

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Mapoeys, Tamanacos and Atysasamas, of which nations, each had a particular language, or a different dialect. To this mission also, several cities and villages owe their foundation; as St. Francis, Xavier, La Divina-Pastora, St. Joseph, San Carlos, Araure, San-Jean-Baptiste-del-Pao, Mayquetie, &c. In a word, it has the merit of completing the civilization of the whole Venezuela province to the banks of the Oronoko, whither it was impossible to penetrate till this mission had opened the road. Thus the total reduction of the province terminated with rendering the mission unnecessary; and in fact it no longer exists. Those villages which are still in the hands of missionaries have for their pastors capuchins from Andalusia.

Other Missions.

In several places in which the same evils existed, a similar remedy has been employed, but not in all cases with equal efficacy.

A mission of capuchins from Navarre exists among the environs of San Faustino and the city of Perija, in the province of Maracaibo; but it effected much more at first than it does at the present day.

In the environs of Varinas toward Santa-Fe, there is a particular mission of Jacobins dependent on Santa-Fe.

On the banks of the river Apure there is a mission of Andalusian capuchins: they have also in charge a few villages of Indians who have not yet

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been brought under the civil authority, in the province of Venezuela.

Guiana, during two centuries, excited no solicitude on the part of government. It was regarded as a possession of two little promise to be worth rescuing from the savages and the waters. It was only in 1724 that Philip V. ordered the province of Catalonia to send thither a mission of thirty capuchins: they arrived in the year following. The labours of this mission produced the formation of more than forty villages, and the conversion of all the Indians who occupy that part of Guiana which is between the Oronoko and Cape Nassau, and between the sea and the river Caroni. Its attentions have been equally exerted in the upper country of the Oronoko, and several villages attest their efficacy; but the reduction is less complete than in the lower regions.

Such are the missions which exist in the country I have undertaken to describe. The great number of works which I have found it necessary to peruse, that I might obtain the history and be enabled to present a summary of it to the reader, have given me an idea of the missionary too honourable to humanity to be kept from the public.

Merit of the first Missionaries.

When imagination conceives all that the greatest devotion, the purest zeal, and the most meritorious resignation can deserve, it will form but a feeble outline of those claims which the conduct of the mis-

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sionaries in America present to the admiration and the applause of all just men. It is important to premise that neither obligation nor obedience influenced them to this enterprise. No person of the religious orders is ever compelled in Spain to enter upon an American mission. It was therefore of their own free will, and through a pure desire to propagate the faith, that these men abandoned their country, their climate, their repose, and their attachments, to transplant themselves into a region where all the elements conspire against the European. But what are these dangers which so many brave, in comparison to the particular hazards which encompass the missionaries? No sooner were they cast upon these distant shores than they plunged into the forests, without any other force than the firmness of their own souls, without any nourishment but the fruits of an uncultivated soil, without any guarantee but providence, without any hope of escaping the ferocity of the natives but that which might spring from the influence of morality: even this too was rendered more feeble, since it could be of no avail until they had acquired the language of the nations they came to teach.

How many of these worthy apostles have been torn in pieces by the savage Indians to whose mercy they had submitted their lives! How many have become the prey of ferocious beasts, have perished with hunger, or have fallen victims to those maladies which excessive heat, heavy rains, and the deadly effluvia of marshes combined to render fatal. How often has it been requisite to renew these missions—to replace their sacrificed members?

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When we behold men devoting themselves to imminent hazard of death, the occurrence may be explained by an extraordinary zeal, and by the glory which results from braving such danger; but when experience has proved that the sufferings to be encountered are beyond human ability to sustain, that the nations among whom they must reside are composed of cannibals;—to find still new martyrs, new victims presenting themselves for sacrifice, is a phenomenon that must ever redound to the honour of the christian faith.

The men who thus readily sacrificed themselves to the propagation of the faith, must have been well convinced that an abode of happiness, and of delights, is the eternal recompence of the just! They must have been fully satisfied of the nothingness of this world, who thus exchanged the pleasures of retirement for a life of agony prolonged. Well did they earn the palm of martyrdom—the only incitement to a vocation which occasions us to shudder while we admire. Virtuous anchorites! to whom society is indebted for so many men who, but for you, would still dispute the prey with the ferocious beasts—to whom religion owes so many proselytes, who would still have been plunged in the gloom of pagan darkness—receive my homage; it is as pure, as your labours were painful and meritorious.

Cooling of the primitive Zeal.

But why is not this eulogium equally applicable to those who occupy the same missions at the present

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day? It is because nothing in nature is constant—nothing survives the lapse of ages without alteration. Opinions, like actions, are subject to the same versatility. Things which seem wonderful at one time, cease to appear so at another.

Even those principles which rest on the immutable laws of nature, are not sheltered from this fluctuation of the human mind. Every nation bends them to its own ideas, and the pressure of years renders them undistinguishable.

Contempt, sooner or later, succeeds to admiration, and enthusiasm gives place to indifference. These new sentiments, worn out in their turn, are replaced in process of time by those whose station they occupy. Thus it is, that the holy fervour of the missionary has become chilled, and no longer exists but on the lips. The religious orders of Spain still furnish individuals who offer their voluntary services to replace those missionaries who die in America. It is doubtless their intention, on leaving Spain, to devote themselves to the spiritual conquest of the Indians, without anticipating any reward for their labours except the crown of the martyr or the recompence of the apostle. But on their arrival in America, finding the lives of their brethren rather fashioned according to the spirit of man than the spirit of God, the frailty of their natures deems it more convenient to follow than to furnish an example. He must be brave who prefers a death of glory to a life of indolence; yet if courage were a general quality it would cease to be a virtue:—at least it would become so common that being found in the cloisters it would of

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course be found every where. Enthusiasm resembles courage in its efforts; but as it is an extraordinary movement of the soul, the same impulse can only excite it for a time: With regard to the provinces of Caraccas, that time *has been* nearly a century.

Actual Missionaries.

The missionaries are at present distributed among the reduced villages, where they exercise curial and apostolic functions. There is but one in each village. He enjoys all the veneration due to a priest, and the homage rendered to a sovereign. The population in these villages consists exclusively of Indians, nor is any other admitted. This measure, prescribed by the law, is greatly advantageous to the authority of the missionary; and such is his vigilance to prevent a mixture, fatal to his power, that Spaniards who may have occasion to pass these villages are only allowed to remain the time requisite for refreshment if they arrive during the day, or to pass the night if they come in the evening. The missionary receives them at his own dwelling, and prevents all communication with the Indians; nor are they permitted to prolong their stay on any pretext. These precautions render it impossible to ascertain particulars concerning the manner of their lives. But their assiduity to conceal the details of their administration, the actual nullity of reduction and conversion among the savages, the tardy civilization of those Indians who for successive generations have been confided to their ministry—these furnish grounds for the opi-

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nion that neither the cause of religion, nor national sovereignty derive any material advantage from their labours.

It is against my will, and only in obedience to those laws by which every historian is bound, that I suffer these melancholy truths to flow from my pen. My heart submits with pain to the necessity of relating others still more afflicting: for deficiency of zeal and lukewarmness of conduct are not the only reproaches merited by modern missionaries.

They are forbidden to exact any compensation from the Indians, either for administration of the sacraments, or for any other ecclesiastic function. The prohibition is not directly violated, but its spirit is completely eluded by the sale, at a thousand per cent profit, of rosaries, scupularies, and little images of the virgin and of the saints. The poor Indian is perpetually menaced with the wrath of God till he has purchased some of all the different kinds for sale by the missionary. This imposition, apparently so trivial, is repeated sufficiently often in the course of a year to become an object of importance and of speculation.

The law has in vain guaranteed the Indian from all obligation to employ his labours gratuitously for any person's profit. The avidity of certain missionaries does not blush to abuse their religious influence; to employ alternately menaces and promises; and thus to obtain from the timid and credulous Indian labour beyond his strength, without allowing him any share of the profits arising from it.

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It is no rare occurrence to see deputations of Indians arrive at Caraccas to complain before the bishop and captain-general against the oppression of the missionaries; to request their recal, or at least the suppression of their abuses. It is equally customary to see missionaries sent for by the royal audience of Caraccas to answer charges in which they are accused of great excesses. There are also some missionaries who openly engage in commerce, or rather in smuggling and monopoly; and who in defiance of their rules accumulate wealth. Report which is not always confined within the limits of truth, ascribes to many of them capitals of sixty and eighty thousand dollars. The amount is perhaps exaggerated, but if one half be deducted, it is impossible to deny the other.

The missions of Franciscans merits an honourable exception from these charges; and I make it with particular satisfaction.

Appointments and Compensation of the Missionaries.

The mercantile spirit of the missionaries finds some justification in the smallness of their allowance. This was more than sufficient for the first missionaries, who subsisted on roots and wild fruits; but is inadequate for domestic support and for a decent maintenance. I have already remarked that all their functions must be gratuitous; they of course derive no income from perquisites. Their compensation from the king must of course supply all their necessities. I will give the reader, who is acquainted with

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America, an opportunity to judge whether the appointments of the missionaries are sufficiently considerable to dispense with further accessions.

Each missionary of the province of Piritu or Barcelona receives 150 dollars per annum in that province, and in the lower country of the Oronoko: in the upper parts of Oronoko and Rio-Negro, or Black River, they have 200 dollars.

The Arragonese capuchins, who serve the mission of Cumana, on the side of Paria and the bottom of the Oronoko, have each 111 dollars.

The mission of Andalusian capuchins, on the banks of the river Apure, in the province of Varinas, and who occupy also some villages of the province of Caraccas, receives annually for each of its members, 50 dollars.

The capuchins of Navarre, who were stationed in the province of Maracaibo, on the borders of the river San-Faustino have each 150 dollars.

The Catalan capuchins who occupy the lower parts of Guiana receive, or should receive, 150 dollars each. I say should receive, because the payment has been stopped since 1791 on pretence that they are possessed of sufficient property to defray every charge.

Riches of the Catalan capuchins of Guiana.

It is true that the capuchins of Guiana possess, in common, immense droves of horned cattle. The manner in which they have acquired them is so ho-

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nourable to their foresight that it deserves to be related.

The first Catalan capuchins arrived at Guiana in 1725, and had to struggle with all the necessities of life in a country where man had till that time demand e nothing from the earth but what he ob tained without culture and without labour. They were on the point of imitating the jesuits, their predecessors, whom misery and famine had compelled to abandon that mission; but the regret and the shame of thus losing the object of their journey directed them to an expedient which they soon rejoiced at having adopted. Two of their number were sent, in 1762, into the province of Barcelona, to procure through the aid of charity, some cows for the commencement of a herd, which should be the common property of the mission. The two envoys accomplished this hazardous and fatiguing journey with a promptitude and a good fortune that is regarded as a prodigy. They obtained from the charity of Pierre Figuera, an inhabitant of that dependency, twenty-eight cows and two bulls, which they conducted successfully to Guiana. The attention bestowed on their natural increase was so efficacious that their present number exceeds a hundred and fifty thousand: all of which belong to the missionaries of Guiana. The missionaries themselves inspect the administration of the droves, which cover the surface of Guiana, and the produce is employed to satisfy their wants. This has not prevented their applying to the king for the payment of their ap-

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pointments; and a royal cedule of 1800 ordered, in fact, that they should be paid themselves and the arrears. But the intendant and audience evade the execution, and subject the demand of the missionaries to such tests that it is evident the result will dispossess them of their cattle if it gives the appointments; or will give them nothing if it leaves them in possession of their herds.

Eulogium of the Missionary Fabara.

Nothing would remain to be related, concerning the missionaries distributed over the district of the captain-general of Caraccas, had I not reserved for the termination of this article the pleasure of making known the brilliant virtues of one distinguished missionary:—the worthy Fabara, who neither yields in fervency of zeal nor in resignation of mind to those fathers who first devoted themselves to the conversion of the Indians. This venerable man belongs to the mission of Arragonese capuchins who were sent into the province of Cumana. Impressed with the duties of his station, he disdained the pleasures attached to the calm and lucrative functions of governing a village of Indians already civilized; and preferred the more painful task of founding new villages among Indians perfectly savage. By his mildness, affability, and morality, he has succeeded in collecting together thousands of Indians, who had constantly repelled all former missionaries.

The Indians who occupy the Bergantin mountains

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and the Guaraunos, at the mouth of the Orenoko, constitute the nursery from which father Fabara draws the population of an immense village formed by him on the banks of the Guarapicke. This village retains the name of *Bon-Pasteur*, (good pastor) given to it by the public voice. The virtue of Fabara is so well known to the Indians, that they believe him to be of a different species from the other missionaries. He is in fact neither sovereign nor even magistrate over his converts, but is satisfied with the appellation of father, the title of friend.—He has the address to inspire the Indians with a love of labour, without their perceiving that they are influenced by the suggestions of the good father Fabara. The products appertain entirely to themselves; so that the aspect of misery which gives a melancholy air to all other Indian villages is replaced in that of Bon-Pasteur, by an appearance of prosperity which rejoices the soul. There are no poor among them, except him who governs them. In short, all other missionaries confine themselves to the preservation of those Indian villages which they have found already established; father Fabara alone founded new villages. His brethren avail themselves of the labours of their predecessors; Fabara labours for those who shall succeed him, for religion, for the Spanish Sovereignty, for society.

Venerable and respectable man, I leave you with regret: the limits of my work deny me the pleasure of detailing all those traits which form your character. Envy will perhaps discover that I have already said too much; but her suggestions are to me of no im-

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portance. May your days be multiplied in proportion to the usefulness with which they are employed!

After the class of ecclesiastics who discharge curial functions, historic order naturally presents that of priests who exercise only sacerdotal functions. This class is composed of seculars and regulars.

Secular Priests.

It is well known, that Spanish America, like the mother country abounds in priests; but it is not equally known that they are less numerous than formerly, in proportion to the population. The ecclesiastic state seems to smooth so easily the road to heaven, and obtains so much consideration and so many benefits, that it could not fail to be eagerly embraced by men, whose character, piety and ambition, desired no better than to become, at small expense, wealthy and respectable in this world, and eternally happy in the other. Hence, in the first ages of the discovery, the vocation of the white inhabitants seemed to be entirely for the priesthood.

We perceive by a request presented to the king in 1644, from the city of Mexico, how much the ecclesiastic ministry engrossed of the population and riches of society. The inhabitants of this principal city in America solicited the interposition of royal authority to prohibit the founding of new convents; to set limits to the revenues of those already established; and to restrict the powers of the bishops to confer orders—because they already reckoned above six thousand ecclesiastics without benefices.

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In the other parts of America the number of priests were proportionally great. The church was the centre of all wishes, of all affections. It is true that the man who rejected the benefits offered by the soil, because they could not be obtained without labour, found in those days no other mode of life suited to his inclinations but the indolence of a convent. But in proportion as fixed regiments established in all the principal places of the government, and an organized militia with military uniforms and privileges, have offered to the Spaniards of the colonies emolument and honours, the seminaries of religion have become sensibly depopulated. At present they seek an epaulette with as much avidity as they did formerly the tonsure.

The multitude of prosecutions having produced a multiplication of tribunals, which employ an inconceivable number of persons, has contributed much to diminish the number of priests. The complicated system of finance, by requiring the creation of numerous lucrative employs, toward which the Spaniards direct their wishes, has also drawn many individuals from the ecclesiastic state. It is not therefore to agriculture that the church can ascribe the loss of her ministers. Notwithstanding this diminution of ordinations every parish has, at least, its curate; no station in the chapters remains vacant; each prebend has its titulary; and there is still, in every city, an overplus of priests who lie in wait for vacant benefices; independent of others without ambition, who lead retired lives on the produce of their patrimony, and the income of their masses.

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America, discovered at that precise period when Spain considered her prosperity dependent on the multitude of religious foundations, partook, necessarily, the effects of that opinion, and was speedily covered with churches and convents. Hence the monasteries of the province of Caraccas invariably date the epocha of their establishment at nearly the same time with those of the cities in which they are placed.

The city of Caraccas had been founded only thirty years, and was in size but a village, when it possessed a Fanciscan and a Dominican convent. It is in fact customary to rank the importance of a city by the number of its convents; nor is this singular thermometer without considerable accuracy. Some persons believe that they discharge their duty to society in thus separating themselves from it; others think that true happiness exists only in the seclusions of a cloister;—nor is it astonishing that persons who make happiness to consist in repose should find it within those solitudes. Devotion greatly favours this *penchant* for retreat. The women soon imitate the example of the men, renouncing the sacred duties of wife and mother, and inclosing themselves for life within the walls of these retirements, where the liberality of the pious must provide for their subsistence.

Pious Donations.

When a person had been denied this happiness of banishing himself into a convent, he repaired this failure of homage to the divinity by leaving his

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property to the monasteries. Money, houses, lands, every thing was applied to this pious work, without which the road to heaven would be found covered with obstructions. A testament that contained no legacy in favour of the convents passed for an act of irreligion which left more than a doubt concerning the safety of the soul of him by whom it had been committed. These gulphs of population soon swallowed up riches also: while they deprived the earth of cultivators they took likewise from those who destined their labours to its culture, the means of rendering it fruitful.

Prebends.

The mania of prebends was presently added to that of donation to convents. Whoever possessed property and did not, when dying, appropriate a part to the prebends left his memory tainted. Nothing more could be necessary for their multiplication.—Where is the inheritance in the provinces of Caraccas that is not incumbered with one or with several prebends? These acts, it is true, have become much more rare, and much less important. People are almost convinced that they may venture to appear before God without having ruined their relatives to found prebends or to enrich convents: they begin to believe that we will be judged rather by our virtues then our prodigalities; but what is given is given;—the convents and churches must, therefore, possess the purest and most unembarrassed riches of Terra-Firma

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It would be wrong to accuse the government of not remedying these evils, since they have neither escaped its vigilance nor its penetration. Since 1622 every notary has been forbidden to pass any act or instrument in which a sick person, on the bed of death, shall give the whole or part of his property to his confessor, secular or regular either for himself, or in title of *fidei-commis*, or to be employed in pious uses, &c. The preamble of this law proves that government had perfect knowledge of the abuses and injuries resulting from these donations, both to the legitimate heir, and to public prosperity. It was contented with pointing them out, and yet sanctioned every disposition of property that was reported.—How is this to be accounted for? Public opinion, too servile to reach the elevation of this reform, paralized the law, which at first had but very little, and subsequently no effect. It was not till 1771 that the execution of it was again called for and obtained in Spain: nor was it published in Caraccas but in virtue of a royal order, dated 22d December, 1800, and then not till the 6th of February, 1802.

Monks.

The causes to which I have ascribed the diminished number of secular priests have produced a similar reduction in the order of Monks. There is not a convent in the provinces of Caraccas that contains half the number it had fifty years back. Notwithstanding the augmented population and riches of the country, more than sixty years have elapsed since

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the foundation of a convent. This does not result from a deficiency of suitable situations. There are many places, distinguished by their increase during the last century, which in former days would have been crowded with convents; but opinion, the regulator of human actions, has changed: the inhabitants are devout enough to preserve, and even to venerate, the convents already established, without being sufficiently so to augment their number.

Churches.

The temples of religion in these provinces are of very solid construction, and in a taste tolerably modern; but the riches they contain is much less than is generally imagined. My observations in the chapter which describes the city of Caraccas are applicable to all the churches of Terra-Firma. They are decent and even elegant without being magnificent. I have now reached, as I think, a suitable place and moment, to fulfil my promise, of giving some details concerning the immunities of these churches and their effects. I request the reader to attribute the digressions of my pen to that indignation which an observer of sensibility experiences, who sees institutions of so absurd a nature resisting the progress of intelligence.

Asylums.

The Spanish government, less from the slowness of its operations than from a respect for ancient insti-

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tutions; less from the timidity than the cautious prudence of its reforms, retains, in the legislation of the empire, as in the usages of its inhabitants, the spirit of those abusive charters which originated in former ages. Centuries have elapsed since they have been banished by other nations to the obsolete archives of antiquity.

Their Origin.

The asylums to which our ancestors had recourse to correct the imperfection of their laws; of which the pagans availed themselves to render their deities more venerable; and which the first christian emperors, having established their privileges, transmitted to the churches;—these asylums must be considered as fetters on the operation of the laws, and as highly prejudicial to the public safety. Yet, through the whole extent of the Spanish empire, they are still as much respected by the magistrate, and as obstinately defended by the ecclesiastic tribunals, as they could have been in the sixteenth century.—This institution bears the semblance of piety, and the church places it in the rank of its most precious rights.

Van Espen informs us that, during the three first ages of the church, the priests, impressed with the sanctity of their station, did not dream of arrogating the right of giving laws to these asylums. That humility which was the basis of all their actions, and to which the advancement of christianity is so much indebted, influenced them here. They claimed no

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other means of serving the cause of humanity than, through recourse to the piety of princes, to obtain by solicitation, in the name of a merciful God, the pardon of those who had flown for refuge to the churches: but they soon obtained, by concession or usurpation, the entire legislation of the asylums.

Inconstancy of their Legislation.

A multitude of bulls, all bearing the stamp of the age, or of the character and views of the pontiff who issued them, threw the legislation into extreme confusion: a confusion the more injurious, as it engrafted among the articles of religion the impurity of criminals who, while their hands were yet reeking with the blood of those they had murdered, fled to the sanctuary of the divinity to escape the vengeance of the law. The churches dedicated to the worship of a just God were thus converted into places destined to brave the operations of justice.

The popes imagined that they increased the respectability of the church and its ministers by elevating its temples above the laws, and rendering them inaccessible to the magistrate; as if justice and the laws did not emanate from divine precept. These considerations, irreconcileable with public safety, and still more incompatible with our ideas of divine justice, embarrassed many consciences: particularly among those who confounded the light of faith with the blindness of credulity. Reason revolted from the belief that God would protect in this world the same crimes to which he had attached eternal punish-

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ment in the future. But in those of human infatuation it was found more convenient to believe than to reason.

Asylums abolished in France.

This influence of the pontific will over the civil law was not, however, conceded by all christian nations. In the eighth century Charlemagne, struck with the abuses resulting from the asylums, rendered them in some degree nugatory, though respect for existing prejudices prevented their formal abolition. He ordered that murderers and other criminals, deserving of death in the eyes of the law, and who fled to the sanctuary of the church, should not receive from it either absolution or sustenance, "*ut homicidæ et ceteri rei qui legibus mori debent, si ad ecclesiam confugerint, non excusentur, neque eis ibidem victus detur.*" (Cap I. anni 773, art. 8.) He ordered also that thieves should be delivered up from their privileged places to be brought before the tribunal of ordinary judges, and that non-compliance should be punished with loss of honours and benefices. The refractory who had no benefices should pay a fine, "*ut patronus de infra immunitatem illi judices ad comitum placita præsentent, et qui non fecerit beneficium et honorem perdat; et qui beneficium non habuerit mulctam solvat.*" (Cap. IX. ejusdem anni.)

Francis I. being less fettered by public opinion, which had materially changed, was enabled to pronounce, and did formally pronounce, an absolute

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abolition of the asylums. Since that epoch, the churches in France have no longer been open to criminals and closed to justice.

Abolished in England.

Henry VII. had some time previous effected this salutary reform in England; and Julius II. the contemporary pope, approved instead of opposing the measure.

Maintained in Spain.

Spain, more scrupulous, continues under the yoke imposed by these arrangements of the holy chair. The jurisdiction of the asylums was during a long period uncertain and variable, because the laws of successive pontiffs allowed them no stability

If the conduct of France and England has not been imitated in Spain, it is not through want of a conviction that the asylums are prejudicial: but the government is still more strongly convinced that the tranquillity of the state requires the utmost circumspection in such reforms. It prefers therefore the slow but certain means which patience and policy offer, without incurring the inconveniences attendant on too marked and hasty innovations. Custom so identifies man with every thing by which he is surrounded, that he feels a respect for every institution, whether vicious or not, in proportion to its antiquity. Every wise government must adopt for the basis of its system the character of the peo-

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ple subjected to its laws. If the national genius be quick, penetrating, and enlightened, the operations of government may be bold; their correctness being promptly perceived will make them to be received and respected: but if the genius be slow, thoughtful, contemplative, legislation must more gradually proceed toward its object, that the usefulness of its means may be ascertained.

Reduction of the Asylums

We can only ascribe to these grand motives, which exist at all times and in all places, the conduct of the king of Spain, in reducing the extent of these asylums previous to their abolition. He at first required his holiness to restrain to a smaller number of temples this privilege, originally common to all. On this demand a bull was issued, dated 12th September, 1772, which orders that throughout the Spanish dominions there shall be but one church of immunity in each place, with the exception of large cities, in which there shall be two, to be designated by the bishops. On the 14th of January following the king ordered the execution of this bull, and since that period the parochial church in every city or village alone retains this privilege. In the city of Caraccas, the churches of St. Paul and Alta-Gracia alone, out of seventeen, enjoy the right of asylum.

Legislation of the Asylums.

The history of all the bulls, and all the laws, which have appeared on the subject of the asylums

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would occupy too much space to be given entire. The curious reader may be gratified by reading the *Instruction manuelle* of Don Fernando Gonzales de Socueba, who has treated this subject thoroughly. It only falls strictly within my plan to make known the actual state of the asylums.

1. The immunity of the temples applies only to him who has committed homicide by chance, or in his own defence. (*Bull of Clement* XII. 1739, *confirmed by another bull of Benedict* XIV. 15th *March*, 1751.) To this it is added that whoever after having wounded any person dangerously, so that his death is apprehended, seeks refuge in a church, shall be delivered up to the secular judges.

2. Those who command or instigate assassinations shall have no more right to the privilege of the asylums, than those who execute them. (*Bull of Innocent* IV.)

3. The immunity does not avail any person who, being in a privileged place, kills a person who is not in it, and *vice versa*. (*Bull of Benedict* XII.)

4. He who commits the sin against nature, who commits violation, or who makes false money, in the church or in any concealed place of its dependencies, is excluded from the immunity. (*De immunitate ecclesiarum.*)

5. Those guilty of high treason and their accomplices have not the right of asylum, nor even those who had knowledge of the criminal design without denouncing it.

6. Those who form conspiracies to deprive the crown of any right, or to detach any possession from

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the royal domain, shall not enjoy the asylum—according to the bull *Alias nos*, paragraph 7.

7. Any person who has attempted assassination is deprived of the immunity, though the person assassinated has survived. (*Bulls of Clement* XII. *and of Benedict* XIV.)

8. The immunity is also refused to a heretic or one suspected of heresy, and to a Jew who after being converted to the faith has apostatized. (*Pastorale de Benoit* XIV.)

9. He who without sufficient authority takes by force from the church those who have sought refuge there, is excluded from the immunity, according to the bulls of Benedict XIII. and Benedict XIV. —and also any person who has prevented the fugitives from reaching the place of asylum.

10. The forger of apostolic or royal letters is, according to the same popes, denied the privilege of asylum.

11. Any person who, having the direction or management of a public bank, has appropriated the funds either entirely or in part, is without the asylum, according to the same letters.

12. Counterfeiters or clippers of gold or silver coin, even the coin of a foriegn prince, provided it has currency in the country, are excluded from the immunity.

13. Those who violate churches in breaking open or burning them are denied the immunity.—(*Bull of Benedict.* XIII.)

14. Anyone who, having taken refuge in a church for a crime sheltered by the asylum, and is drawn

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therefrom under deceitful promises, and is taken without the sacred limits, shall no longer enjoy the immunity, even though he prove the deception practised on him. (*Decree of the Council.*)

15. Those who are taken without the church and who demand to be re-established there, under pretext that they have been drawn from thence at any other time, should not be allowed the asylum.—(*Concordat between the holy chair and his Catholic Majesty, in* 1737.

16. Any one who escapes from prison where he was confined for a crime unprotected by the immunity, cannot enjoy it, even though he takes refuge in a church; since his flight, far from having diminished the magnitude of his offence, has tended to increase it. (*Ulpianus.*)

17. Those who escape from prisons where they were confined for light offences; or those who are already judged, and who in being conducted to prison, encounter a place of asylum, cannot avail themselves of its protection. (*Tolosan, chap.* XXII.)

18. He who is condemned to death for false testimony, has no asylum, according to *carteli.*

19. The immunity is equally denied to blasphemers, sorcerers, sacrilegious persons, and persons excommunicated, to whom the entrance into the church is prohibited; for it would be unjust for the church to protect crimes which she herself punishes. (*Papon, chap XXII.*)

20. Those who are condemned to the gallies or to public labour can claim no asylum, because the

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laws and canons protect the accused, and not the condemned. (*Papon, arrest. lib.* 1. *tit.* 1. *de reb. div. &c.*)

21. Debtors have no asylum against their creditors. (*Papon, lib.* 1. *tit.* 1.)

22. Thieves enjoy no immunity, of whatever species the theft may be; according to a law of Spain anterior to all others rendered on this matter by the holy chair.

There are many other offences which the canons, the bulls and the laws have exempted from the ecclesiastic immunity. Their detail would be too long: It is sufficient to say that the asylum, though it extends to very few crimes, is not the less obnoxious to reason, justice and the laws.

The Asylums are injurious to the Laws.

The most ordinary offence, and that for which the asylum seems to have been intended, is homicide, either involuntary or committed in self defence. But if that is the principal object of the asylum its existence is an insult to the law; for it insinuates that the innocent would be punished for the guilty if the church did not shelter the head of the former from the indiscriminating sword of the magistrate. What then is this barbarous legislation which thus confounds crime and virtue, the assassin and the victim?—What! a guiltless individual, sufficiently unhappy in having involuntarily cut short the days of a friend, a friend whom he will ever mourn, is condemned to perish on the scaffold equally with the vile assassin

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who makes a trade of bathing his hands in the blood of his fellow creatures? The man who rather than passively submit to the dagger of the assassin has destroyed his insidious foe must with his head atone for the natural act of self defence!

But on examining the Spanish code, prejudiced as I am against it by the system of asylums, I find there is no law which either expressly or by implication authorises such abuses. They all exact, that to merit the punishment the offence should have been committed knowingly and voluntarily. They all afford protection to the innocent, and display their rigour only against the convicted malefactor. Since the Spanish laws, like those of all other nations, inflict punishment only on the aggressor who is guilty by premeditated design, and to whom the asylum does not extend—of what use then are those asylums? They at least are useless. But can they be useless without being dangerous? No, for it cannot be denied that they are injurious to government, as they weaken and retard its operations.

They embarrass the Operation of the Law.

A man who in the Spanish domains commits homicide, whether voluntarily or not, takes refuge in a privileged church: he is claimed by the secular tribunal, and delivered up conditionally. As soon as he is constituted a prisoner, his prosecution is commenced, which is communicated entire to the ecclesiastic tribunal to declare whether the offence by its nature is or is not within the protection of the asy-

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lum. If the case is in the least degree doubtful, and often when it is not so, it produces debates between the tribunal organ of canons and bulls—and the tribunal organ of the law.

The minister of the church, always rather inclined to support the immunity than to avenge the outrage on society, makes a merit of extending the privilege, and considers it an honourable victory over the laws to place the palm of innocence in the hands of him who merited death. The magistrate, in his turn, believes his authority interested to deprive every fugitive, indiscriminately, of the protection of the asylum. The first believes every thing permitted in the name of humanity; the second that every thing must yield to the rights of society. How many criminals derive their impunity from this rivalry of power; and how many innocent individuals become its victims! It is true that the question is definitively submitted to the audience; but the audience can only judge upon the documents presented to it; and all the danger of injustice arises from the art with which these documents are drawn up by a judge jealous of his jurisdiction.

All this proves beyond a doubt, that the asylums are entirely in favour of crime by the shackles which they place on justice; and in this respect they can only be considered as insidious vines with which the ignorance of ancient times have suffered the social tree to be overrun, and which reason cannot too soon remove. There still remain some circumstances to relate concerning them which enforce more pointedly the necessity of their abolition—since in-

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dependent of the evils with which I have already reproached them, it is evident they are the incentives to all the assassinations that are committed. Let us examine them in this point of view.

They encourage Assassination.

It is certain that the jurisprudence of asylums is not sufficiently simple, clear and precise, for their extent or limits to be well understood. Even the members of the law are frequently divided on the question, whether the crime of any particular refugee be susceptible or not of the ecclesiastic immunity. Each case which occurs establishes a process between the tribunal which would condemn, and that which would absolve. The circle of asylums must therefore be badly defined, or great duplicity must exist between the disputing judges. But if questions of this kind appear doubtful even to civilians, whose whole time is occupied by the study of the law, what idea can the vulgar have of them? They know, unfortunately, that such a church enjoys the right of immunity; but they are far from imagining that there are exceptions—and still further from understanding their particulars. If they behold a criminal delivered, in despite of the asylum, to the tribunal of the law, they blame the ignorance or connivance of the ecclesiastical tribunal, and never the restriction of the immunity. What is the consequence? The malefactor who conceives a crime, believes his impunity assured, if he can take refuge in a church before he is seized by the hand of justice.

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Encouraged by this belief he concerts his scheme, bathes in the blood of a fellow creature, and flies to the foot of the altar for its ministers to impose silence on the law.

How many murders, how many assassinations are perpetrated in the confidence of being sheltered by an asylum? Or rather, what murder, what assassination occurs, which is not occasioned by this confidence. Not a homicide is committed but the culpable takes refuge in a privileged church. It is true, this single measure does not suffice, since the question subsequently occurs, whether the crime be of a nature to be excepted or not; but I ask, who would take refuge in a church if he did not believe that the asylum would effectually screen him from the severity of the laws? Would he not otherwise have preferred the alternative, natural to a culprit, terrified by his crime, of flying to the woods, to the mountains, or to a distant country? It is then his confidence in the asylum, and his persuasion that its power is unlimited, which decide the criminal to place entire reliance therein, for protection from offended justice.

If the assassin acted under a conviction that the temple of the divinity offered him an inviolable asylum, it doubtlessly occasioned the consummation of his crime; it gave action to an offence which at first existed but in thought. Is not the immunity to be charged with all these dangerous abuses? That assassinations are promoted and multiplied by these sanctuaries is an opinion supported by the manners

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of those countries where they are abolished; for in them assassinations are no longer committed.

Asylums must soon be abolished.

It is to be hoped then, that an institution as fatal to public order as it is contrary to reason, will soon cease to dishonour the Spanish legislation. This reform presents so many objects of utility, that it is impossible the legislator should hesitate in adopting it. It is at the same time so urgent, that he cannot delay without being responsible to God and man for all the blood which the asylums occasion to be shed. The people are sufficiently enlightend to perceive the justice of this measure. The ministers of the church are too virtuous, too just, too well informed, and too deeply interested in the public tranquillity, not to sacrifice to social order, a privilege which occasions ferocity of manners, nourishes enmities, enforces vengeance, and paralizes those laws which in every well regulated government should be the sole safeguard of all. I beg the reader to be persuaded, that I am so little the partizan of reforms, that I could not express my wish concerning the one in question if I were not persuaded that I am expressing the general opinion of the Spaniards.

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CHAPTER VII.

OF THE AGRICULTURE AND PREPARATION OF PRODUCE.

Extension of the right of conquest—concession of lands—watering—Property in mort-main—quality of earths—production—Cacao—Its medicinal virtues—its cultivation—Enemies of the cacao—Means of preserving a cacao plantation—withering of the cacao—Harvest of cacao—Indigo—requisite soil—manner of sowing it—weeding—cutting it—its fabrication—Cotton—almost all soils are suitable—its plantation—treatment—harvest—culling of it—packing—Coffee—suitable soil—manner of planting—weeding—harvest—manner of drying—negligence of the cultivators of Terra Firma—Sugar—soil proper for the cultivation of the cane—canes of Otaiti—plantation of the soil cane—weeding—maturity and qualities of the cane—cutting of it—young shoots—seasons of grinding—mills—fabrication of sugar—constituent carts of sugar—alkalizing—removal of the scum—prognostics—boiling—phrystalization—putting it in forms—stirring it—signs which it gives of good fabrication—on cooling—claying the sugar—*(Terrage)*—manner of drying—boiling of it—the syrup—Spanish process of refining—Tobacco—cultivated on the king's account—nurseries of Tobacco—plantations—weeding—Tobacco vermin—growth of Tobacco—signs of its maturity—precautions on gathering it—preparation of dry Tobacco, or *cura seco*—preparation of black Tobacco, or *cura negra*—manner in which the king pays Tobacco to the cultivators—reflections on the cultivation of Terra Firma—first cause of its decline—second cause—third cause—fourth cause—fifth cause—means of encouraging cultivation.

Extension of the Right of Conquest.

SPAIN, rendered proprietor of America by the famous bull of Alexander VI. acted as if this respectable title gave her over countries discovered or to be discovered a right still more extensive than that derived from ordinary conquest.

She not only stretched her authority over the new world and gave it laws, but she also took possession of the lands as if they had not been inhabited.

Several Spanish authors explained, without the aid of the bull of 14th May, 1493, the direct domi-

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nion of the king over every thing that appertained to the Indians. This decision, intended to silence the cries of malignity and injustice, is founded upon principles sufficiently singular to deserve the attention of my readers.

The kings of Spain, say Sepulveda, Victor Gregoire Lopez, Joan Mayor, Guerrero, Bozius, Bannes, &c. have legal power of extending their supreme direct domain, even over the lands occupied and peopled by the Indians—*because these same Indians were so barbarous, so gross and so savage, that they scarcely merited to be placed in the rank of men; and that it was necessary that some one should undertake to govern, protect and instruct them; so that conducted to a humane, civil, social, and polite life, they might be worthy to receive the faith, and to embrace the christian religion.* As a discussion of this point of public rights would present but sterile results, I shall pass to the partition of lands.

Concession of Lands.

In 1513, Ferdinand V. began to render *cedules* for the distribution of lands. According as circumstances demanded, new ones were issued, until the system, in this particular, had acquired its present standing. In the sixteenth century, the portion of land that should be conceded to each Spaniard was fixed. The latter was obliged to build within a certain time on the land granted him; and to cultivate it, under penalty of its reverting to the

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crown. This limited time was fixed at three months by a cedule of 20th November, 1536.

The viceroys and governors had the right of granting lands, subject to the advice of the cabildos. These favours were to be accorded in preference to those who contributed to the conquest, or to those who devoted themselves to founding villages, (*conquista dores y pobladores.*) They were forbidden to transmit them by sale, into the hands of ecclesiastics.

These regulations, and many others instituted on the same matter, were but little attended to in the captain-generalship of Caraccas until the seventeenth century. The lands formerly divided among the conquerors were sufficiently extensive to gratify every individual. Difficulties, therefore, about the division and possession of lands should have been very rare, and prosecution still more so; but, in proportion as the ceded lands approached each other, the question of *mine* and *thine* occasioned a recourse to the will of the law, and to the authority of the magistrate.

After many decrees, which it is needless to mention, one was issued on the 25th November, 1735, by which the king reserved to himself the personal exercise of the right of conceding vacant lands, until then exercised by the viceroys and governors. The intention of this measure was evidently to draw petitions and money to Madrid, but it had little effect—nor was the public utility, which furnished the pretext, much benefited by it. The prospect

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of enormous expenditures, which always attend official applications far from home, induced those who were not rich either to give up their lands, or to hold them without a title, rather than incur expenses beyond their abilities, or the value of the lands. The evil, whether quickly perceived or not, was not removed until the instruction of 15th October, 1754.

By this act of the king, the audiences were invested with the right of granting lands, and of pronouncing definitively on every thing which concerned them. The sub-delegates, nominated by viceroys and presidents of audiences, were expressly commissioned to prepare all affairs of this nature, so that they might be judged on the simple presentation of the papers, without any expense or delay.

The disorders occasioned by the cedule of 24th November, 1635, were remedied by an ordinance that all those who held lands by grant of the crown, (*terres domaniales*) since 1700, should exhibit their titles to the sub-delegates, who confirmed them of course if they had been accorded by the viceroys and governors, and if the boundaries of their lands corresponded with those mentioned in the concession. In default of thus appearing before the sub-delegates their lands reverted to the crown. If on a survey it was discovered that an estate was more extensive than specified in the concession, the possessor was obliged to purchase the surplus of the king at a moderate price—otherwise, even though

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cultivated, it reverted to the crown and was sold. In short the sub-delegates had, thenceforth, the right of granting vacant lands, or in other words, to dispose of them to the highest bidder. For the Spanish exchequer did not suffer this means of augmenting its duties to escape unimproved.

The price of lands, as may be supposed, is proportioned to their situation, irrigation and proximity to a large town or a seaport—if they are cultivated, the species and state of cultivation have a direct influence on their value.

The land is measured by a *fanegada*, forming a square of four hundred and forty feet (French measure) from one angle to another.

Watering.

Irrigation, being the most important agent of vegetation, inasmuch as it renders man independent of the inconstancy of weather and intemperance of seasons: and being, above all, indispensable to cacao, is naturally an object of the first consideration. The multitude of vallies devoted to agriculture have each their floods, their rivulets and their rivers, but it is seldom that their waters are equally distributed among plantations where the land is often uneven. The planters, therefore, have often more or less occasion, to turn the course of streams, to which the neighbours frequently make opposition. From hence arise innumerable lawsuits, ruinous and perpetual. More than one half of the causes that

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come before the audience of Caraccas relate to the distribution of water: and as it is easy to give any kind of face to such actions, either by bribed surveys, by mendicant declarations, by the length and intricacy of writings, and the sophisms of chicanery; the tribunal, whose duty it is to pronounce, hesitates, demands new information, and by its irresolution contributes to perpetuate and complicate discussion, till it becomes a complete labyrinth, where the opinion of the judge cannot distinguish truth from falsehood, reason from paradox; all becomes doubt and incertitude except the ruin of clients and the languishing of agriculture.

Possessions in Mortmain.

The laws of the Indians have vainly endeavoured to free Spanish America from the injuries resulting to public prosperity and the fortunes of families by the possession of territorial property held in mortmain. Different decrees have expressly forbidden the sale or gift of lands, either cultivated or uncultivated, to ecclesiastics, communities or fraternities. A cedule of the 24th October, 1576, addressed to the viceroy of Mexico, says, "In the mean time you will ordain "that none of the said monasteries of monks or nuns, "shall acquire a purchase, or be able to acquire other "effects or rents than those which they shall possess "at the moment when you receive these presents." Another cedule of the 20th of May, 1631, addressed to the audie ce of Quito, contains the same orders; but the national spirit, rarely disposed to

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change its direction at the mere voice of the law, and seldom yielding but to the slow impulse of time, employed all possible means to elude the will of the legislator.

For a person to refrain from purchasing his soul by donations of effects which he could not take with him, was considered an impiety which the legislator did not dare to command without incurring the risk of being disobeyed. An individual did not precisely give up all his effects at once under the form of a donation, nor of a sale; but he charged them with the rent of a capital, more or less important in favour of such convent, church or fraternity. The son, in his dying donations for the good of his soul, emulated the precautionary liberality of his sire. Hence, additional pious legacies, additional rents assigned on the real property. Thus the landed estates of Terra-Firma have not apparently changed proprietors; but their value has successively passed, in parts more or less considerable, to convents and churches. Happy, though rare, as I have already observed, is the possession which is exempt from similar tributes.

The interest paid on capitals bequeathed to convents, is called *censos* or *tributos*. It is at the rate of five per cent per annum: an extraordinary tax in a country where real property of whatever nature does not pay more than four, exclusive of all duties and expenses. When I come to recapitulate the causes of the stagnation of produce I shall not omit the mortgages with which the agricultural establishments are overcharged.

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Qualities of Earth.

The earth of the part of South America which I am now describing is, like that of the rest of the globe, varied according to its situation, elevation, distance from the sea, or the vicinity of rivers. It is composed of nearly the same beds as that of the ancient continent. The Baron de Humboldt found follicular granite *(granit folliculaire)* at three hundred and sixty toises above the level of the sea, on the mountain De la Selle of Caracas, (saddle mountain.) He has also found it at the height of one hundred and forty one toises, at cape Codera; and he assures us that from the Unara river to Saint Martha all the coast is of the same granite. The mountain of Capaya is also composed of a granite which changes into slated talc (talc ardoisé). Vitriolated felds par, slated chlorite (chlorite ardoisé.) Limestone large grained with mica, rock chrystal, primitive green rock, *(roche verte primitive,)* silvered galena *(galena argentée,)* quartz, magnetic sand, red oxide of chrystalized titan, quartz mixed with black lead. Porcelaine earth—argillaceous earth, &c. &c. are equally found scattered in the provinces and in the same proportion as in Europe. Argillaceous earth is found in the greatest quantity.

The mould, that part of vegetable earth which in a manner envelopes our globe, is much shallower in Terra-Firma than in Europe. Philosophy and history are unable to explain, why a new country where the soil has received since its formation the deposits of the leaves, branches and trunks of trees

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which successively perish, spring up and perish, to form new deposits, should contradict the natural supposition that the mould should be deep, in proportion to the centuries which have furnished it with the means of increase.

Has this part of the globe, then, experienced particular revolutions subsequent to those of the ancient continent? Did the sea cover this portion of America for a longer period than Europe? Was it still the dominion of waters, when Asia was already the dominion of man? Or is the powerful action of the sun injurious to the formation of mould, by the rapid desiccation of the vegetable skeleton. These are questions, too evidently springing from conjecture to be placed in the rank of historic facts. My task confines me to explain the grand fertility of this soil, though almost deprived of the fundamental agent of vegetation. This phenomenon is occasioned by the violent heat of the sun under the torrid zone, and by the immense quantity of rain which falls between the two tropics. Heat and moisture, two fixed principles of vegetation, fertilize the most ungrateful soil, and give to nature that ever smiling aspect which in the temperate and frozen zones is checked by the frosts until the vivifying influence of the sun repairs for some months the ravages of winter.

The vallies of Terra-Firma are most productive, because they enjoy a more equal combination of heat and moisture than other parts. The plains, too much exposed to the ardent rays of the sun, furnish only pasturage, appropriated to the raising of oxen, mules and horses.

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Productions.

For a century after the acquisition of Terra Firma the settlers did not attempt to raise any species of commercial produce. They only disturbed the soil in search of gold and silver. But not finding in the mines sufficient to satisfy their thirst for riches, they turned their thoughts entirely towards the pearl fishery, which, in a short time, being found too inconsiderable to pay the necessary expenses which it required, was also abandoned.

Cacao.

Disappointed in these expectations of speedily amassing wealth, the inhabitants of Venezuela found themselves obliged to procure the objects of exchange by the slow method of agriculture. They gave the preference to cacao, or rather this was the only production which invited cultivation. Indigenous to America, cacao became one of the principal aliments of the Spaniards, as it had from time immemorial been that of the Indians. To the latter it also answered the purposes of money. One hundred and fifty cacao nuts were valued at a real of eight to the dollar. The relish for chocolate passed, after the conquest, into Spain, where in a little while it was used as generally as in America. It may even be said to have become with the Spaniards, a want which precedes that of bread. It was introduced by the Spanish monks into France.

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Its medicinal Virtues.

Alphonso de Richelieu, cardinal of Lyons, is the first who made use of chocolate to cure obstructions in the liver. He must, however, have had an uncommon faith to attribute that property to chocolate; for medical men are at present far from acknowledging it. It is generally agreed that those who use chocolate every day derive no other advantage from it than what they promise themselves from a nutritive substance. It is nevertheless incontestible, that chocolate thins or thickens the fluids, according as it is more or less roasted. It is beneficial to those attacked with a phthisis or consumption. A confection is made of the cacao, which is serviceable in fortifying the stomach. The oil, extracted from the nuts, is a remedy for colds in the lungs, and against corrosive poisons.

Mr. Henley has lately discovered that chocolate, warm from the mill and cooled in a pewter vessel, becomes highly electric, and even retains this property for some time after it is taken out of the vessel; but soon loses it on being handled. This power may be restored to it once or twice, by melting it in a large iron ladle, and pouring it as before into a pewter vessel. But when it is dry and in powder, this power cannot be given to it by the same process. But, if a small quantity of olive oil be well mingled with the chocolate, and the latter melted in a ladle or iron pot, its electricity may be restored by cooling it in a pewter vessel. From these experiments Mr. Henley conjectures, that there is a great

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affinity between the phlogistic and electric fluids, and that perhaps they are the same thing.

Chocolate is at present used throughout Europe; each nation gives it a particular preparation, which, however, can only differ in the degree of thickness or liquidity which they allow it; or in the quantity of sugar and the quality of the aromatics which they use in its composition. It is remarked, also, that the southern nations prefer the oily cacao, whereas those of the north give preference to the dry and bitter.

Its Cultivation.

Plantations of cacao were speedily multiplied in Terra-Firma, and the soil so admirably seconded the labours of the planter, that in the produce abundance was united to excellence. The cacao of this quarter ranks next to that of Soconusco. It is well known that the best commercial recommendation of cacao is that of coming from Caraccas, or in other words, from Terra-Firma. But even in these provinces the quality varies. The cacao of Orituco is superior to that of other places, and a quantity of equal bulk weighs twenty per cent more. The cacao of the coast comes next, and obtains a preference over that of the interior.

The plantations of cacao are all to the north of the chain of mountains which coast the sea, and in the interior country. The former extend from Cumana to the mouth of the Tocuyo: the latter are situate in the vallies of Tuy, Orituco, Ocumare, Cura, Marin, Tare, Santa Theresa, Santa Lucia, Zuapira,

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Santa Philippo, Barquisemeto, Valencia, Guigue, and Cariaco.

All kinds of soil are not equally adapted to the culture of cacao, still less are all exposures. An analysis of the soil destined to this culture never furnishes indications on which reliance can be placed. No regard should be had to colour or quality; it is only requisite that it should be free to a certain depth, which is ascertained by the size of the trees with which it is covered; this sign determines the land proper for cacao.

A suitable situation is not so easily found. It should be exposed as little as possible to the north, and be on the borders of a river, which may communicate moisture to the soil in dry seasons, and which may receive its drainings in times of rain. A preference is particularly given to land which may receive from the river the benefits of irrigation without being exposed to injury from its overflow.

After having chosen the land, it should be cleared of all trees, shrubs and other plants. This operation is performed in various manners. It is customary in Terra-Firma to commence felling the trees immediately after the rains, that is about the month of November: the wood, after being cut, is left to dry, then collected in heaps and burnt.

As soon as the new plantation is cleared, it is crossed with small ditches, in directions according to the declivity of the soil; these serve to drain the stagnant waters, to carry off the rains, and to irrigate or water the soil whenever necessary. The *alignement* is then laid out, in which the cacao trees are to be

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arranged. They are planted in triangles or squares. In either case, there is always in the centre an alley, bordered by cacao trees, and running from east to west. When they are planted in squares, this alley is crossed by another running from north to south. The cacao plants should be placed at 15 or 16 feet (French measure) from each other, in good soil; and about 13 or 14 feet in soil of inferior quality.

This is almost the only tree in nature to which the enlivening beams of the sun are obnoxious. It requires to be sheltered from their ardour; and the mode of combining this protection with the principles of fertility forms a very essential part of the talents which its cultivation demands. The cacao tree is mingled with other trees, which guard it from the rays of the sun, without depriving it of the benefit of their heat. The erytrine and the banana are employed for this purpose. The latter, by the rapidity of its growth, and the magnitude of its leaves, protect it for the first year. The erytrine endures, at least, as long as the cacao; it is not every soil, however, that agrees with it. It perishes after a while in sandy and clayey soils, but it flourishes in such as combine those two species.

In the Antilles this protection cannot be given to cacao, as it would expose the plantation to destruction by every hurricane. Besides, the cacao succeeds but indifferently there, and is much less oily than in other parts.

The banana and the erytrine are planted in the same *alignement* with the cacao trees.

The quality of the soil, and the species of the ery-

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trine, should determine the distance at which they should be placed. That kind which the Spaniards call *bucare anavco*, is planted in a fertile soil, at the distance of two alleys, that is to say, at each second range of cacao trees. That which they call *bucare peonio*, is placed at the distance of three alleys in good soils (about 48 French feet.)

The former species of erytrine is that which elevates itself the highest. The second species has many thorns, the upper surface of the leaf is darker and the lower whiter. Both kinds should be cut in the wane of the moon, and remain in the shade until its increase, at which time they should be planted. It is much preferable, however, to take them from a nursery.

In one range of cacao trees a banana is placed between two cacaos, and an erytrine between the two following. In the other range a banana is placed between each cacao tree, and no erytrines, so that the latter are at a distance of two alleys. The banana and the erytrine are first planted, and when a shelter from the sun is thus provided, the hole for the cacao is made, around which are planted four stalks of the yucca plant, at the distance of two feet from each other. At the end of two months the cacao is planted; the smaller the plant is, the better. There are, nevertheless, soils subject to worms, where the small plants do not answer; but, excepting in this particular, the small plants are preferable, because the large require more labour for their transportation and planting, many of them die, and those which survive, bud and shoot forth, but are never of any value.

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The cacao plant should not exceed thirty-six inches in size when transplanted; if larger, it succeeds with difficulty, as will be shown.

The nurseries of cacao demand an excellent soil, well prepared, where the water does not remain.—They should be well sheltered from the sun. Small knolls of earth are formed, in each of which are put two grains of cacao in such a manner that they are parallel with the level of the ground. During the first twenty days the seeds are covered with two layers of banana or other leaves. If necessary, the ground is watered; but the water is not suffered to remain. The most suitable time for sowing is in November.

Where there is not a facility of watering, the planting of the cacao should take place in the rainy season; but where the former is practicable, it is best to plant in dry weather and assist nature by irrigation, since it is then in the power of the cultivator to give the exact quantity of moisture necessary. But in all cases, care should be taken that the plants are not wet in the interval between their being taken out of the ground and replanted.

When the cultivation is from the seed, (which is never the case in the provinces of Caraccas) two grains of cacao are planted in the same manner as before described, so that they are on a level with the surface. They are then covered with a banana leaf, folded three times, on which is placed a small weight to keep it down. As soon as the seeds shoot forth, the banana leaf is removed. If both grains have

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sprouted, the feeblest plant is cut, to insure the vigour of the other.

When the bananas grow old they should be carefully felled, lest the cacaos should be injured by their accidental fall. They are totally removed as soon as the erytrines yield sufficient shade; this operation gives more air to the trees of the plantation, and encourages their growth.

Until the cacao plant attains four feet in height, it is trimmed to the stem. If it shoots forth several branches, they are reduced to three, at equal distances; and in proportion as the plant increases, the leaves which appear on the three branches are stripped off. If they bend much, and incline towards the earth, they are tied in bunches, so that the tree may not remain crooked. The branches which are trimmed are cut at the distance of two fingers from the tree. The suckers which spring from the tree are also removed, as they only live at its expence.

Enemies of the Cacao.

The cacao trees should have sufficient shade to prevent their being burned by the sun. If they are much exposed to its rays, their branches are scattered, crack, and the tree dies. They are also infested with worms which gnaw their bark all around, then attack their interior and destroy them. The only remedy which has hitherto been found, is to employ people to kill these worms, which are deposited by a small scaly winged insect, which gnaws the tree;

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as soon as it hears the approach of its destroyers, it lets itself fall and trusts to its wings for safety.

The colour of this insect is a mixture of ash colour and white. If pressed, it emits asound something similar to the noise of water thrown on a very hot substance. It has two small horns on its head, the points of which are directed upwards. It is so lively that even when the head is separated from the body, it is a long time in dying. To depose its worms it makes small holes in the tree.

At the commencement of the winter or rainy season, another worm makes its appearance, which devours the leaves of the young cacao plant. This species of worm is called *goaseme*, and they are some years so abundant that all the people of the plantation are solely employed in destroying them. This worm is four inches in length, and of the thickness of a finger. It is called *angaripola* or Indian, on account of the vivacity of its colours. It is believed that these worms are mediately produced by other large worms in the earth, from which are engendered butterflies, who lay their eggs on the leaves of the cacao. These eggs are full of small worms which feed on the leaves of the cacao, and which are in clusters of the size of a shilling. They are sought and destroyed with great attention, as they occasion considerable damage. Those which escape, lodge themselves in the earth, and in the succeeding year are changed into butterflies. At the time when the worm makes its appearance, it is necessasy to make fires, which

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should not be so large as to injure the cacao, yet sufficient to attract and burn the butterfly.

The plantations of cacao in the valley of Tuy, the quarters of Marin, Cuba, Sabana, Ocumare, San. Francis, &c. are subject to another species of worm called *rasquilla.* It multiplies in the dry seasons.

There are small insects, called by the Spaniards *acerredores,* of the same figure with those who eat the bark of the cacao, but larger and of a blackish colour. They eat the branches of the cacao. They are always found upon those branches which they have cut ; and the evil can only be obviated by killing them.

The worms called *vachacos* occasion also much injury. They eat the leaf and the flower. To destroy them it is necessary to seek them in their nests in the earth. Water is thrown on the spot and is stirred as in making mortar. By this means their young are crushed and the evil is diminished, if it is not entirely removed.

A creeping plant often attaches itself to a branch of the cacao tree, which it covers and causes to wither, by nourishing itself with the substance of the plant. The only remedy is to remove it: this forms the occupation of the slaves on Sundays.

When the cacao trees are in a state of produce, they are subject to a disease called taint. (*tache.*) This is a black taint or stain which attacks the trees, encircling them below, and kills them. The mode of preservation is to make, in the beginning, a slight notch that shall pierce the bark. But if the taint is

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extensive, it is necessary to cut all the affected part. It then discharges a liquid, and is healed. The bark remains of a violet colour in the part that has been tainted.

The other enemies of the cacao are the agouti, stag, squirrel, monkey, &c. The agouti produces most havoc. Its ravages are not confined to what it eats. It occasions others still more injurious by causing the fruit to fall which grows on the body of the tree. It often destroys in one night all the hopes of the proprietor.

The stag eats the husks or pods of the cacao, while yet tender, with so much voracity that in the body of a stag killed on the banks of the Tuy there were found three hundred unmasticated. Stags are also fond of the buds, which they reach by standing on their hind feet; and on that account are more dangerous by reason of the tender age of the cacao plant. They produce further ravages by striking off the bark with their horns.

Squirrels eat only the liquid exudation of the cacao, without touching the grain; but the fruit is thrown to the ground and is either eaten by some other animal, or lost in the ditches made to carry off the water.

Monkeys devour the grain in the same manner as hogs; the Spaniards call them *goarros*, of which there are several kinds. They occasion great destruction, as they eat the pods, small or large, and throw down with their paws the flowers and young fruit. To drive away all these animals it is necessary to use a gun.

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Birds are not at all less injurious to the cacao. The whole class of parrots, in particular the great Ara, which destroys for the pleasure of destroying, and the parroquets, which come in numerous flocks, conspire also to ruin the plantations of cacao.

Means of preserving a Cacao Plantation.

It is necessary that a cacao plantation should have always shade and irrigation; the branches of the plant should be cleared of the scurf that forms on them; the worms should be destroyed; no large herbs or shrubs should be permitted to grow; since the least disadvantage resulting therefrom would be the loss of all the fruit that should fall into these thickets. But it is most essential to deepen the trenches which carry off the water, in proportion as the plant increases in size, and as the roots of course pierce deeper: for if the trenches are left at a depth of three feet, while the roots are six feet in the earth, it follows that the lower part of the cacao plant is in a situation of too great humidity and rots at the level of the water. This precaution contributes not only to make the plantation more durable, but also to render the crop more productive. It is necessary also to abstain from cutting any branch from cacao plants already in a state of produce. Such an operation might occasion the subsequent crop to be stronger; but the plants become enervated and often perish, according to the quality of the earth and the number of branches cut off.

If the earth of the plantations be pressed and

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trampled by animals, the duration of the plant is diminished. Irrigation, made with judgment, maintains them long in a state of produce.

Withering of the Cacao.

The fruit of the cacao withers on the tree from three causes:

First, when the plantation is, during a long time, inundated with water. I have seen plantations of cacao, which had only been covered with water thirty hours, and of which the fruit was totally withered.

Second, very abundant rains, particularly in very damp vallies. This is only to be remedied by keeping the plantation well drained, that the water may not remain on it.

Third, a want of necessary irrigation, and the watering of the plantation under an ardent sun. The vapour from the earth withers the fruit. If the rains are deficient for a time, and an excessive rain succeeds, the fruit of the cacao also withers.

This desiccation or withering takes place every where; but in some places the surplus of fruit, which the tree is unable to nourish, is alone subject to it. In others, as Araguita and Caocaga, it withers in proportion to the northerly rains. The soil occasions another kind of withering. The pods become stinted, containing some good and some bad grains. The Spaniards call this *cocosearse*, which means defective.

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Harvest of the Cacao.

The cacao gives two principal crops in a year, one about St. John's day, the other is towards the end of December. The cacao also ripens and is gathered during the whole year. But in all seasons, the people of Terra Firma make it a point, as far as possible, to collect their crops only at the decline of the moon, because, say they, experience proves that this precaution renders the cacao more solid, and less liable to spoil.

Don Fernando Blanco, an inhabitant of Caraccas, maintains, however, that this is a ridiculous prejudice. He even adds that the practice is impossible; since it would be necessary to make the whole harvest during fifteen days of the decline; but that in thus observing the phases of the moon, the cacao would never be gathered without much of the fruit rotting on the tree: great advantages would therefore be lost by suspending the harvest during the increase.

To collect the cacao, those negroes and Indians are employed who have the sharpest sight;—that only the ripe fruit may be gathered. The most robust and active are chosen to carry it to the places where the grain is to be shaken out. The aged and maimed are employed to shake out the grain. This operation is performed on a place well swept, and covered with green leaves, on which they place the cacao. Some open the pod, and others strike out the grain with a small piece of wood, which must not be sharp, lest it should injure the grain.

The good and bad cacao must not be mingled to-

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gether. There are four sorts of cacao in every crop; the ripe and in good condition, the green but sound, the worm-eaten and the rotten. The first quality is best, the second is not bad; but the two others should be rejected.

As soon as that which is not fully ripe begins to shew specks it must be separated. As to the pods which are not perfectly ripe, they should remain in heaps during three days under green banana leaves, that they may ripen before they are hulled. Where the cacao is put in store, great care is necessary not to leave among it any pieces of the pod or leaves, or any other excrementitious particles. This care must be repeated every time that it is removed from the store or replaced in it.

The cacao must always be exposed to the sun, on the fourth day after it has been gathered, and this exposure should be daily repeated until it is perfectly dry. When that is the case, the grains burst on being squeezed, their shell resounds when struck, and they no longer become heated on being placed in heaps: the latter is the best proof that the moisture injurious to their preservation is dissipated. If the cacao is not sufficiently exposed to the sun it becomes mouldy; if too much, it withers and easily pulverises; in either case it soon rots.

When the quantity of cacao gathered is considerable, it is placed in the sunshine by a hundred quintals at a time, unless the cultivator has a sufficient number of persons employed to expose a greater quantity: this operation is indispensable to prevent it from becoming mouldy. If the rains prevent this expo-

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sure to the sun, it is necessary, as soon as it is sufficiently cleared or purified, to spread it in apartments, galleries, or halls, with which the plantations of cacao must be provided: this operation cannot be delayed without danger of losing the crop.

It is to be wished that stoves were employed to dry the cacao when the sun fails, but this expedient, so simple and important, is unknown in Terra-Firma.

It is almost universally believed that the most essential precaution for preserving the cacao consists in gathering it at the decline of the moon. I believe that they may more seriously calculate on the care of depositing it in apartments so hermetically closed that the air cannot penetrate: it would be advisable to make these apartments of wood, for the more perfect exclusion of moisture. The floor should be elevated two feet; under the floor a pan of coals is placed covered with a funnel, the point of which enters into the heap of cacao and there diffuses the vapour. In the apartment which contains the cacao, some persons place bottles of vinegar, slightly stopped with paper, to prevent the formation of worms.

The cacao, which begins to show specks, may be preserved from entire corruption by a slight application of brine. This occasions a small degree of fermentation, which is sufficient to destroy the worms, and to preserve the cacao during a considerable time from new attacks. Why is not this preservative also employed after the cacao is dried, and when placed in the store, where it awaits the purchaser?

At St. Philip, they make use of smoke to pre

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serve the cacao: it is also ascertained that fine salt, thrown in small quantities on the cacao protects it from worms.

Much has been done for the cacao when it has been cleared of all green or dead grains and of all extraneous articles; when it has received no bruise or injury in the operation of drying; and when it has been subsequently kept in a place that is dry and not exposed to the air: yet, even with all these precautions, cacao of the best quality is seldom found marketable at the end of a year.

These circumstances sufficiently prove, that the culture of cacao requires attention more than science, vigilance rather than genius, and assiduity in preference to theory. Choice of ground, distribution and draining of the waters, positions of the trees destined to shade the cacao, are almost the only points which require more than common intelligence. Less expence is also required for an establishment of this kind, than for any other of equal revenue. One slave, as I have already said, is sufficient for the preservation and harvest of a thousand plants, each of which should yield at least one pound of cacao, in ground of moderate quality, and a pound and a half in the best soil. By an averaged calculation, of twenty ounces to each plant, the thousand plants must produce twelve hundred and fifty pounds, which, at the customary price of twenty dollars per hundred, produce two hundred and fifty dollars per annum for each slave or labourer. The expences of the plantations, including those of utensils, machines,

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and buildings, are also less considerable for cacao than for any other produce. The delay of the first crop, and the accidents peculiar to cacao, can alone diminish the number of planters attached to its culture, and induce a preference to other commodities.

The cacao plant is not in a state of perfect produce till the eighth year, in the interior, and the ninth in plantations on the coast. Yet, by a singularity which situation alone can explain, the crops of cacao commence in the sixth year in the valley of Goapa, and at the east of the mouth of the Tuy. In the vicinity of the line, and on the banks of Rio-Negro, the plantations are in full produce in the fourth, or at most the fifth year.

The cacao tree continues productive to the age of fifty years on the coast, and thirty years in the interior country.

In general the culture and preparation of cacao receive more attention in the eastern part of Terra-Firma than in other places, and even than in the French colonies. It is true that the excellence of soil contributes much to the quality of the article, but, without the assistance derived from art, it would be far from possessing that superiority awarded to it by commerce, over the cacao of every other country.

Indigo.

Cacao was exclusively cultivated in the provinces of Caraccas till a very recent period. In 1774, Don Pablo Orendain, a priest, and Don Antonio Arroide,

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applied themselves, to the astonishment of their fellow-citizens, to the culture of indigo, which had previously been attempted and abandoned. All their firmness was requisite to brave the sarcasms of prejudice, which could perceive only folly in requiring indigo from a soil accustomed to yield no other produce than cacao.

The first essay was severely censured the second experienced less severity; and after a short time, this pretended madness found numerous apologists. The force of prejudice could not withstand the test of experience; and it was speedily ascertained that the indigo of Terra-Firma was not inferior in quality to that of Guatimala, the invariable price of which (eighty dollars per hundred) is more than the indigo of any other part of the globe will command.

All new plantations were from that time prepared for indigo, and the vallies of Aragoa, chosen for this new species of culture, experienced an unexampled and astonishing rapidity of increase. Immense plains till then uncultivated, were covered, as if by enchantment, with plantations of indigo. The concourse of cultivators and the profits resulting from the indigo occasioned many villages to spring from nothing, and gave to others which were then in a state of ruin, as Maracay, Tulmero, and Victoria, the smiling aspect and substantial consistence of cities. The culture of indigo has extended from the vallies of Aragoa to the southwest as far as Varinas: on the coast none of it is seen, nor eastward of Caraccas to the gulph of Paria, nor southward to the Oronoko.

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The Soil requisite for Indigo.

Indigo is one of those plants which require a light soil and warm climate.* The land destined for it should be well cleared and drained: for the same

* It has been believed till the present day, that the indigo plant flourishes only in the climate of the torrid zone, and in those parts of the temperate zone which are near the tropics.—Experiments recently made by Bruley in Italy, by order of government, have proved that nature has not excluded Europe from the possession of this plant. It is only requisite to choose, in a southern climate, a suitable soil and exposure, to profit of the season most favourable to vegetation, to sow good seed, and the principal difficulties will disappear. Those which appertain to the manufacture of the indigo would readily yield to a union of talent and observation. With these precautions and these expedients, M. Bruley has obtained the indigo plant in the gardens of the chateau de la Venerie, near Turin; and by submitting it to the process employed at St. Domingo, he extracted an indigo which might bear comparison with the finest indigo of the colonies.

M. Bruley made his plantations towards the end of February. They gave him three cuttings of a plant handsomer than those produced by the generality of land in the torrid zone; for it rose to the height of five feet, while that in America rarely exceeds three feet. It also furnished an equal quantity of indigo, with that given by a plant of equal bulk, in the colonies. These remarks, it is true, are only warranted by small experiments: possibly, they would experience some variation in larger undertakings.

M. Icard de Bataligni, another colonist, proprietor at St. Domingo, and a man of excellent observation, cultivates the indigo plant at this moment, (1805,) in the department of Vaucluse.—His results confirm the hopes formed with respect to the culture of indigo in Europe.

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degree of humidity which favours the nourishment of the plants, is fatal to indigo.

In ground on which indigo is to be sown, the wood should be cut four months before it is set on fire. The flames consume it then more readily to the stumps. The lines or rows are then to be immediately traced; and the earth being thus well cleared, the seeds are to be sown under favour of the first rain, and three months suffice to produce a good crop.

Mode of Sowing.

Attention is due to the choice of seed and to the manner of making the holes which receive it. They should be three inches deep and two feet distant in good land, but ten inches only in land of bad quality. In the French colonies the holes are but two inches deep and only from five to six inches distant. The quality of the soil requires it. It is customary to make these holes in strait lines; but at Terra-Firma they also plant in beds, and those who have adopted this method, extol it with as much warmth as every projector employs to defend a new system. In each hole as many grains are thrown as can be taken between the finger and thumb: they are then covered with an inch of earth. It is of no use to sow fields of indigo except in time of rain; the earth must have already imbibed water, or rain must speedily follow the sowing: otherwise the seed becomes heated, corrupts, and is lost with all the labour it has occasioned.

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Weeding.

Provided the season favours vegetation, the indigo begins to sprout the fourth day, often even on the third. At the end of fifteen days it is already assailed by weeds which dispute its subsistence, and which finish by destroying it, if the hoe be not speedily employed.

Not only the abundance of the crop, but even the manufacture and quality of the indigo, absolutely require the weeding to be so scrupulously performed as to remove every other plant. If this care be not rigorously employed, difficulties will occur in the fabrication which cannot be obviated after the appearance of the indigo. They are occasioned by other herbs being cut and carried to the vat (or *cuve*) with the indigo. These herbs, by fermentation, give a juice which deranges all the signs of fabrication, and by its interference, prevents the developement and re-union of the essential parts of the indigo. The indigo thus obtained is bad in quality and less in quantity than the crop promised.

The cutting of Indigo.

After three months, the indigo is commonly fit to cut, and this operation is far from immaterial. It has also its rules and its procedure. The first object of attention is the maturity of the indigo: the second, to cut the plant one inch from the earth. To cut it higher may retard the shoots of a second cutting, or may even entirely prevent them. Large crooked

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knives are much more convenient for this purpose than any other instrument; and at the same time more advantageous with regard to the subsequent crops.

The indigo plant is transplanted as soon as cut to the place where art must give it the form, under which it becomes merchandise. All the implements necessary for the chemical process are reduced to three great vats (or *cuves*) of mason-work, built one above the other in such manner that the middle cuve can receive the liquid from that which is above it, and can discharge it into that which is below. The first and most elevated is called *la pourriture* or *trempoire;* and is much larger than the other two. In the French colonies, it is from ten to twelve feet long, nine or ten broad, and three deep. In the province of Venezuela it is from eighteen to twenty feet long, fourteen or fifteen feet broad, and only twenty inches deep.

The second *cuve* bears the name of *batterie.* It is not so wide as the *pourriture* but much deeper, that the water may be agitated in it without escaping over the edge.

The third *cuve,* smaller than the preceding, is called *bassinot* or *repository.* It is there that the indigo undergoes the last operation. But the most essential article to an indigo maker, is a rapid and very limpid stream of water, that may be employed at pleasure in the fabrication of the indigo.

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Fabrication, or Manufacture of Indigo.

I come now to speak of the fabrication or manufacture, which appears in these places so simple, easy and natural, that it is confided to negroes who know nothing, or to whites who are equally ignorant.—Both are incapable of giving a reason for the slightest cause; but they know admirably well how to command effects, and to obtain by practice, results of which the most skilful chemists would be proud.

The blue colouring substance known to us under the name of indigo, is combined with heterogeneous articles, from which the manufacturer must disengage it. This combination is so intimate that it eludes the nicest eye. Like many other results it appears to be the product of a peculiar operation, the effect of which gives great satisfaction; but we are groping in the dark when we endeavour to pursue the causes which have contributed to produce it.

The whole body of the plant, compressed in a certain quantity of water, enters into an extremely active fermentation, of which we will notice the details.

In proportion as the caloric increases, azote is disengaged, the herbaceous mucilage separates, the vegetable is decomposed, the mixture absorbs oxygen. At first the liquor takes in the basin a green tinge. It is strongly agitated. that the elements of the vegetable may subtilize, and the fermentation speedily augments to the highest degree. The fermenting fluid passes from a green to a violet tinge, and this by degrees changes to a blue colour.

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The first fermentation takes place in the *trempoire*, in which very clear water had been previously placed. The plant is prevented from swimming by being pressed beneath the surface. The state of the plant, the ground that produced it, and the season in which it was cut, are guides to direct the manufacturer. This fermentation takes place more or less promptly, according to causes which concur to hasten or retard it. Ten, twenty and thirty hours are most frequently the term: it rarely requires a longer time. In Terra-Firma, when not prevented by the state of the plant, nature of the soil, or the season, twelve hours suffice for the fermentation. The great art of the fabricator is to check it at a proper degree. If the fermentation is too feeble or too brief, the plant remains impregnated with much essential salt, which diminishes the quantity of the indigo. If it be too long, the tender extremities of the plant undergo a putrefaction which destroys the colour.

The odour of the fermenting liquid, and the numerous flies which fly over it, are signs to which the indigo-makers of Terra-Firma attach most weight. There was published at St. Domingo, some years ago, the following criterion to ascertain invariably the correct fermentation of the indigo.

It is only requisite to write on white paper with the matter to be examined. If this ink be of very high colour it is a proof that the fermentation is not yet at its true point. The experiment is repeated every quarter of an hour, till it is perceived that the liquid has lost its colour. This was pronounced an

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infallible index to show the true point of fermentation. This test had its time and its mode; but the planters returned to the use of the silver cup.

When the fermentation is advanced, some of the liquid is thrown into a silver cup, and shaken till grains are formed; by their quality and that of the fluid they judge of the fermentation. In this experiment, the best method is to draw off the liquid, by means of a spout or cock, from the cuve into the cup*.

* The active genius and constant observation of the inhabitants of St. Domingo, have carried the preparation of colonial produce to a degree of perfection which the neighbouring colonies have been unable to attain. The fabrication of indigo alone, seemed condemned to be the perpetual sport of chance, and the caprice of circumstances. Its success was always doubtful. The fabricator of indigo who only lost a tenth of the cuves, or vats, of that plant, was considered as skilful. There were some who lost a fourth. The honour of ascertaining invariable rules was reserved for the intelligence and experience of M. Nazon, an inhabitant of the quarter of Mirbalais. The arts are indebted to him for certain marks, according to which, indigo is made upon principles as constant as those which direct the refiner in the manufacture of sugar. M. Bruley, who has imparted this discovery in an excellent memoir upon indigo, read in the lyceum of the arts, on the 30th Floreal, year 9, expresses himself thus: "These "precious advantages France will henceforth enjoy. She owes "it to the labours and the intelligence of citizen Nazon, a colo- "nist, and a proprietor at St. Domingo, but at present in "France, and an associate of the lyceum. By judicious obser- "vations and long experience, he has been enabled to secure the "success of all the cuves of indigo.

"To obtain this colouring substance the indigo plant must be "cut in its maturity. It must be put entire to macerate in a

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After signs of complete fermentation are obtained, the whole contents of the cuve are passed into the batterie, where it undergoes another process still

" basin of mason work called a *cuve*. The dimensions of it are " twelve feet, French measure. *quatre metres*.

" The maceration requires from fifteen to thirty and even thirty- " six hours, more or less according to the temperature that is " experienced at the moment. It is also necessary to have regard " to the quality of the plant, the nature of the soil that produced it, " and that of the water in which it is immersed.

" The first index which shows that the maceration approaches " its proper point, is the sinking of the scum or foam which rises " into the space of about a sixteenth of a *metre*, that was left va- " cant in the cuve on compressing the herbs. [*a metre is three " feet.*] When the cuve is covered with a kind of crust of a cop- " per blue, the moment of sufficient maceration is not far dis- " tant. This symptom, however, is insufficient, and often deceit- " ful. There is another on which more reliance can be placed: " that is to draw from a spout or cock in the lower part of the cuve, " a little of the fluid it contains. It is received in a silver cup; " when the feculent particles begin to precipitate to the bottom of " the cup, then it is judged that the herbs have attained the true " degree of maceration for obtaining indigo.

" Such was the procedure most in use, but it too often led to " error. A certain mean to insure correctness, is to observe " carefully the water contained in the cup. Five or six minutes " after it has been placed there, it forms round the sides of the " cup a glory *(aureole)* or cordon of feculæ or sediment, at first of " a green colour, and then blue. When the maceration is not " at the requisite point, this cordon or girdle, has difficulty to de- " tach itself from the sides of the cup, but finally precipitates, " and concentres at the bottoms of the vase, always towards the " centre, and the water above it becomes limpid, though of a " yellowish tinge.

" When these signs are perceived, they indicate, infallibly, the " success of this first operation. The liquid is then passed into

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more important, as it is intended to separate the carbonic acid, and to facilitate the re-union of the particles composing the blue feculæ or sediment. This object is obtained by violently agitating the fluid.—No less care, attention and experience are requisite in this, than in the preceding operation. According as it is well or ill performed it may correct the errors

" a second basin or cuve, made below the former. This second " cuve is called *batterie*, because its use is to beat the fluid, still " charged with the feculæ. That it may speedily detach itself, " it is stirred: this operation is performed with the arm, or with " a mill. It is essential that it be not beaten too long a time. Ex- " cess of beating mixes anew the feculæ with the water, from " which they cannot be again separated, and the contents of the " cuve are lost: in place of indigo, only troubled water is obtained.

" The latter inconvenience may be easily avoided with a little " attention. When it is observed that the feculent particles are " sufficiently united, the water is poured from the *batterie* into a " third and smaller basin or cuve, called *diablotin*. The bottom " of the *batterie* is found covered with a blue and very liquid paste: " this is received in sacks of coarse linen in form of reversed cones; " and the watery parts are left to drain from them. The sacks " are then emptied upon tables in the *sechoirs* or drying places; " the blue paste is kneaded; when it becomes thick, it is spread " and cut in small squares, that it may the sooner become dry. " The indigo is then made, and is soon sufficiently dry to be " marketable.

" I suppress details, contained in a much longer memoir, of " which I furnish only an extract. It was important to make " known, that there exists a certain process, by pursuing which " there is no fear of being deceived in the fabrication of indigo.

" Experience has proved that this process has never failed to " produce complete success: more than fifteen hundred cuves, " fabricated according to it in different quarters of St. Domingo, " have furnished proofs of its correctness."

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of imperfect fermentation, or may occasion the loss of indigo, which has thus far been correctly fabricated. If it be not sufficiently beaten, the grain is left diffused in the water, without re-uniting at the bottom of the cuve; the mass of feculent matter that forms the indigo, is also diminished. If it be beaten too much, the grain is dissolved and broken.

The facility with which the grain precipitates to the bottom of the *batterie* is an unequivocal sign that the beating has arrived at the correct point. We should not hesitate to pour off the water, and to empty the miry or feculent matter into the third cuve or *riposoir*.

It only remains to put the indigo in sacks, which should be suspended to facilitate the expression of the water it still retains. It is then put to dry in the sun, in boxes made for the purpose. Before it is perfectly dry, it is cut in small pieces of an inch square, which detach themselves readily from the box when the indigo is entirely dry.

The inhabitants of Terra-Firma dry the indigo under sheds. This method is more tedious, but is favourable to the quality of the indigo. Its combination is more intimate, as is proved by the hardness it acquires. The different actions it experiences increases its lustre. In short, the weight in proportion to bulk, is greater than that of indigo dried in the sun. Yet however well drained and dried the indigo may be, it always experiences, in the first months of its fabrication, a diminution sufficiently evident to warrant a hastening of the sale.

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It is customary to pack the indigo in barrels and thus to circulate it in commerce. The Spaniards alone, put it in packages of a hundred pounds, and so well conditioned, that the rough usage they encounter between the place of manufacture and the sea-port, does not occasion any damage.

Indigo is packed in sacks of coarse linen, and the sack is covered with a beef's hide, so hermetically sewed that nothing can penetrate it. These packets are called cerooms. They possess great advantages over barrels. They are more solid; may fall on stones without incurring danger; and are much more convenient for transportation. Two cerooms make the load of one animal. They are stowed to much greater advantage in stores and buildings.—And in their circulation in Europe, they have much less to fear from the carelessness or unskilfulness of carriers.

Cotton.

Indigo had scarcely obtained a distinguished rank among the commercial productions of Terra-Firma, when the same honour was sought for cotton; which, till that time, was ranked among a thousand local productions applicable to domestic uses, but unworthy to figure in commerce by the side of cacao. A hundred plants formed about the proportion of the largest plantation. In 1782 some planters effected that for cotton which others had unsuccessfully attempted for indigo. The vallies of Aragoa, Valencia, Araure, Barquisimeto, Varinas, Cumana,

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and successively several other places in the provinces of Caraccas, assigned a part of their territory to the cultivation of this plant.

Most grounds suitable for Cotton.

The cotton plant, says Valmont de Bomare, is one of the most useful productions furnished by nature in either continent, and manfactured with art by human industry. There is perhaps none less delicate respecting the nature of soil. It grows on almost all lands, and if any preference be shown, it is in favour of those grounds which other vegetables reject. It only requires particularly to be protected from the north winds, which are destructive to it, by reason of the drizzling rains which accompany or follow them. Heavy rains are equally injurious. The same degree of humidity which gives vigour to the vegetation of coffee, cacao and the sugar cane, occasions the cotton plant to perish.

The parish of Trou, situate in the northern part of St. Domingo, experienced five years of extraordinary drought, which commenced in 1772. The plains covered with sugar canes, and the hills cultivated with coffee, were afflicted with a desolating sterility. M. Chevalier, an inhabitant of that quarter, took occasion in 1776 to sow his grounds with cotton, and gathered prodigious crops. All the sufferers by that calamity imitated his example, when in 1777, the rains having resumed their ordinary course, destroyed all the cotton plants, and restored to the soil its former productions.

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The cotton tree requires, therefore, land which, by its position and natural productions, repels clouds rather than attracts them, and which is not exposed to the north. The coast from cape de la Vela to cape Paria is, from its bearing, improper for the culture of cotton; of course we find there no establishments of this kind.

Cotton Plantation.

The only preparation that the soil destined for cotton requires is the removal of trees, shrubs and other plants. When the ground is well cleared, they proceed to the planting of cotton. The season most proper for the colonies of the gulph of Mexico, is during the four months of June, July, August and September. In the dependencies of Caraccas they only plant in May and June, because, as the cotton plants blossom always in the month of November, those which had been planted in July and August would be surprised by the blossoming season, before they had reached their natural growth, and had acquired the consistence necessary to perfect fructification.

We in general plant cotton trees, in the French colonies, in a quincunx form. This mode requires more time and skill, but has advantages which entitle it to a preference. In Terra-Firma they plant on straight lines drawn with a cord, and separated by a space of seven or eight feet. The holes to receive the seed are four feet distant from each other, and in each, five or six grains are thrown. When half the

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number rise, the plantation is fortunate. In fifteen days the young plant begins to shoot; at this period a light rain assists it; but it does not make very evident progress during the first five or six weeks. It is then weeded, that no other plant may share with it the nutritve juices of the earth, and only two or three of the strongest stalks are left in each cluster.

Treatment of the Cotton Plant.

In the Antilles, no weeding succeeds the first till the fourth month; and then the plant is pruned, by cutting the length of an inch or more, from the stalk as well as the branches. It is seldom necessary to repeat this operation, as the cotton tree stops at the height of five feet, and the sap does not diffuse itself into useless or superfluous branches. But in Terra-Firma the richness of the soil, or rather the activity of its principles of vegetation, require that the pruning should commence in the first month, and should be repeated every month at the decline of the moon, till the blossoming season. The first pruning should be made with cutting, and only with the finger and thumb, that the tree, which is yet tender, may not be injured. After the first time a knife is always employed to check the growth of the tree to the height of six feet. The weeding should also be repeated every month, until the cotton tree has attained sufficient size to cover the soil with its branches, and by its shade, prevent any herb from growing.

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From the fifth to the sixth month, the plant furnishes abundance of flowers, to which succeed the husks or pods containing the seeds, enveloped in a down which is called cotton.

Its Harvest.

After the seventh month the cotton bursts the pod, and, if not gathered in time, it falls to the ground and is spoiled. Violent winds and heavy rains which happen during the cotton harvest, occasion considerable losses to the planter. It is not merely at this epoch that the cotton plant experiences many risks. Its seed softened by the developement of the germ, is devoured by worms, wood lice, and scarabs. In the first month of its existence it is attacked by crickets, who effect their ravages in the night. Its leaves, while tender, are the pastures of insects called *diablotins* (little devils.) An infinitude of other worms, contribute equally to its loss in our colonies.

The worms have never visited the cotton plant in the vallies of Aragoa until the year 1802, and their appearance then has been attributed to the abundant rains which fell in the four preceding years.

As soon as the harvest is finished, some French planters, and the English generally, cut the cotton plant, the former merely every second or third year, the latter every year, and within three or four inches of the ground. The Spanish, as well as the generality of the French, are of opinion, that in replanting it every year they are insured a better crop, and in conformity to this belief all the planters who have

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sufficient hands to perform this increase of labour, renew every year their plantations of cotton.

Several of them have assured me, that the shoots of the cotton plant do not give half the quantity of cotton yielded by the original plant.

Cleansing.

It is not merely in its cultivation that the cotton requires most care; it derives its value chiefly from the manner in which it is prepared. The cleaning or picking, is unquestionably the most delicate operation; it is above all essential, that the cotton should be freed from the grains which it envelopes in the pod, and that these grains should be removed whole.

If broken, they impart yellow stains to the cotton, which diminish its value, in proportion to the extent of the damage. The principal merit of cotton consists in its whiteness; and whatever contributes to deprive it of that quality does it a material injury.

The most advisable mode of cleansing the cotton perfectly, is to pick it with the hands, but its slowness is discouraging. A workman, whatever may be his activity, cannot clean more than eight pounds per day. This sole operation, therefore, would employ more hands, and more time than the whole cultivation; and would cause expenses, which would increase enormously the price of cotton. This is assigned as the cause why its cultivation has been so much retarded in Terra Firma. In fact, it experienced no increase, until mills for cleaning cotton were introduced. The use of these machines has so ra-

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pidly become general, that some habitations possess from twenty to twenty-five. With the assistance of one of them, a person can clean with ease twenty-five pounds of cotton per day. In the vallies of Aragoa, several of the inhabitants have submitted these machines to hydraulic power, and save thereby much expense and time. The purity of the cotton is greatly affected by the materials of which the small cylinders, adapted to these machines, are constructed. Wooden rollers cleanse the cotton less expeditiously, but they cleanse it better; those of iron bruise the grains, break the stalk, and singularly alter its quality. At Cumana, Barquisimeto and Narinas, wooden rollers only are used, and the cotton from those parts, has a marked superiority to that from the vallies of Aragoa, where they use none but iron cylinders.

Packing or baling.

In general the Spaniards are less careful of their cotton than the French, English, or, above all, the Dutch: but they pack it better. Instead of packing it up, like other nations, in bales heavy and incommodious, of which the weight, which is three hundred pounds, renders the management and transportation difficult, and the size occasions it to be ill adapted to storage, the Spanish make small packages of a quintal, and reduced to so small a compass by the aid of presses, that each package is not more than fifteen inches in length, nor from ten to twelve in breadth. The package is generally covered with

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an ox's hide, skilfully arranged so as to protect the cotton from all damage. This method is certainly recommendable to universal adoption.

The colonies, it is true, possessing but few horned cattle, cannot give to their cotton the same envelope which is used by the Spaniards; they can only imitate the form of the package, and reason dictates that is the most advisable.

Perhaps it is no disadvantage to the colonists that they cannot employ hides in this manner, since I am assured, at the moment I am writing, that this usage ought to be proscribed, because the hide, when wet emits a liquor which stains the cotton, renders it more difficult to be spun, and less proper for manufacturing.

Coffee.

The produce which, next to cotton, engaged the attention of the Spaniards of eastern Terra-Firma, was coffee. The colonies of every other nation have for more than fifty years carried on a considerable commerce in this article, while in the Spanish possessions it was uniformly cultivated merely for domestic consumption.

In 1784, D. Barthelemy Blandin, encouraged by the example of the French colonies, devoted his property and care exclusively to the cultivation of coffee. The land which he chose in the valley of Chacao, within one league of Caraccas, proves that he was guided in his choice of a situation, rather by its proximity to the city, than by fertility of soil; and

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the establishments which he has successively effected there, attest his perseverance rather than his ambition. In fact, throughout the whole extent of the provinces of Caraccas, there is scarcely another valley so little adapted to the culture of coffee as that of Chacao, particularly in the part to the north of the great road which crosses it.

Dr. Sligo, priest of the oratorial, gave at the same time the preference to coffee, and employed himself in cultivating it, if not with as much success, at least with as much assiduity as Blandin—and in the same valley. The eyes of all the province were fixed upon these two cultivators; and they had their imitators in proportion to the progress of their new culture. The valley of Aragoa, where it seems that all the activity of the Spanish is concentrated, was the first to adopt this new branch of cultivation, and it rapidly passed from one end of these provinces to the other. Not only all the new plantations, commenced since 1796, are in coffee, but many of the inhabitants have abandoned cacao and indigo and cultivated it in preference. This has been principally occasioned by the long war from 1793 to 1801: the seas, covered with English cruisers, offering no prospect to commerce but that of inevitable losses, the communication with the mother country was cut off, and the different articles of produce remained in the hands of the colonists, at least that of cacao: since, as will be shown in chap. VIII. the other articles were not in want of a market. It is well known that cacao will not keep for more than ten months or a year, and that after such time it loses its value; it

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was natural, therefore, for the colonists to substitute in its place another produce of quicker sale, or which might wait in the magazines for a change in politics with less risk of damage than cacao; and the article which presented these advantages was coffee.

It must not be supposed, however, that this culture has attained all the increase of which it is susceptible in a soil so extensive and fertile as that of Terra-Firma. The quantity produced, independent of what is used for domestic consumption, does not exceed one million pounds.

Suitable Soil.

All land within the extent of sixty leagues crossed by the line, is suitable for the cultivation of coffee, excepting land composed of hard and cold clay, or light and sandy ground on a bed of marl. The leaves of the coffee planted in such soils, turn yellow, and the tree perishes or is barren. It requires, in preference, a soil new and free, a little elevated, where the coolness and the rains moderate the excessive heat of the torrid zone, which would overpower the plant if exposed to all its violence.

A rule equally easy and invariable in forming a coffee plantation, is to choose land newly cleared.—The size of the trees is the most certain standard by which to judge of the fertility of the soil. Mountains or hills, the elevation is unimportant, provided the thermometer of Reaumer never descends below ten or twelve degrees. The plantation should be ex-

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posed as little as possible to the north; but this precaution is more necessary in the Antilles than at Terra Firma, particularly if at a sufficient distance from the sea to be protected from the salt air, which withers the coffee.

The first operation necessary in forming a coffee plantation is to clear away the trees; and the manner of doing this depends upon the character of the land. If it be level, or only in gentle declivities, it should be carefully cleared of the stumps, after having burnt all which the axe could reach. But if the soil be mountainous, the stumps are necessary to prevent the ravages made by the torrents, which sweep away with them more or less rapidly, in proportion to the violence of the rains, the bed of vegetable earth which is the depositary of all the principles of fertility. How many plantations have been rendered sterile as soon as cleared by the neglect of this precaution. The soil of mountains always wears away quickly because of the waste occasioned by the rains. This effect may be easily retarded, but it is impossible to prevent it entirely.

Mode of Planting.

The land destined for the coffee being well cleared, holes are made for the new plant, in such order as the planter may think proper, and at the distance required by the ground.

The cultivation of coffee is not sufficiently advanced in Terra Firma, nor the soil sufficiently scrutinized to endure the adopting any other method than

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that of planting the coffee in parallel lines more or less distant from each other, and the holes more or less separated. But the time will probably arrive when industry, eager to convert every thing to profit, will not disdain to avail itself of the results effected by the talents and emulation of its neighbours. It is for such a period that I would recommend the method of planting in triangles, a method the more profitable, since it saves nearly the sixth part of the land.

A square of ground planted in triangles of seven plants, gives two thousand nine hundred and twenty-six coffee plants; if in squares of seven plants it only gives two thousand five hundred; if in squares of ten, it gives twelve hundred and twenty-five; if in triangles of ten, it yields fourteen hundred and forty-one.

To plant in triangles, a cord must be stretched, divided by knots at the proposed distances. Suppose seven: place a coffee plant at each knot. For the second range, have two sticks of seven feet in length; place the end of one of the sticks at the last plant, and the end of the other stick at the first; bring the other ends of the sticks to touch and they form the summit of an equilateral triangle. At the point thus formed, place a stake, to which fasten the cord divided by knots. The same operation is observed at the end of the cord. It is fixed and a plant of coffee deposited at each knot. The other ranges are formed in the same manner.

In whatever manner the planting is performed

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the distance of the holes should always, as I have observed, be proportioned to the richness of the soil; the more fertile the land the greater should be the distance between the plants. This, like all other useful truths, had to combat with custom and prejudice, but experience soon insured to it, in our colonies, the respect due to true principles. In fact, it was natural to suppose that, on an equal surface, a greater number of plants would yield more coffee than a less one. The influence of light and air on vegetation was not as yet theoretically known there. They groped on in the majestic career of the operations of nature. They made all kinds of experiments, and the preference was given to that which succeeded the best. As they are instigated to these observations rather by the avidity of riches, than the love of science, they avail themselves of the results without analyzing the causes.

It was the custom at first to place the coffee plants at the same distance in every kind of soil, and interest dictated to plant them very close. The common distances was from four to five feet; after several years it was discovered that this mode obtained good crops on poor land; where the land was most fertile, the plants had the appearance of the greatest beauty when budding and flowering. They increased in size; their branches were entangled and became so bushy that the planter feared lest they should break under the load of fruit, with which they promised to be burthened: but, scarcely had they acquired this luxuriant appearance, when nature, exhausted by her premature liberality, ceased her benefits, and

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left the cultivator confounded and disheartened by so fatal a phenomenon. It was finally thought proper to increase the distance between the plants, and by degrees this distance was entirely regulated by the nature of the soil In the poorest lands, it should not be less than four feet; and in the most fertile, never less than eight. Prudence and interest must point out the just proportion.

A judicious planter regulates also the depth of the holes to the quality of the soil. The deeper the bed of vegetable earth, the deeper he makes the holes, and *vice versa;* for the grand object is to prevent the roots from penetrating to the stony stratum and perishing. At all events, the coffee may be planted in grains or in shrubs, as it is done at St. Domingo,*

* " In order to procure the coffee plant, they go under the old trees and pull up the young bushes produced by the fall of the ripe fruit. They transport them in bundles from one plantation to another; after having cut off a part of their roots they place them in the holes prepared for their reception.—This method is defective; a great part of the plants procured in this manner, independent of the faults in their formation, which they may have acquired under the parent tree, are subject also to the disadvantage of having never been exposed to the ardour of the sun; they therefore present no certainty of success to the planter. The planters are often obliged to recommence their plantations for several successive years, before they are regularly established.

" I avoided this inconvenience, by an expedient which several planters have since adopted.

" I sowed the coffee grains at six inches distance, in a quincunx, in soil prepared for that purpose. The nursery that sprung from them was watered and treated with care; from thence I took the young plants necessary to form my plantations. When they were

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but it neither yields as much, nor as quickly, neither does it endure so long, as if taken from a nursery.—The choice of soil for the nurseries demands more attention than would be supposed. If the soil be ungrateful, the plant will not have the requisite quantity of that animating principle which constitutes its vigour, and removal to a better soil will never remedy this original defect. If on the contrary, the soil of the nursery is much richer than that of the plantation, the young plant will not find, in the new soil to which it is translated, an equal quantity of that carbonic acid which contributes so powerfully to augment the energy of vegetable life; and it will inevitably decay.

It is rare, however, that the failure of plantations is ascribed to this cause, when every appearance would otherwise warrant their perfect success.

The young plants should be taken up with all their roots, and planted in the same state. They should be two feet high. They are covered with earth two inches above their roots, and cut at ten inches above

to be transplanted from the nursery, care was had to water the ground well, and the small plant was taken up with the earth which surrounded its roots.

"It may easily be imagined that the plants thus transported from the nursery would suffer no alteration nor delay in their vegetation: the plantations also were regular. Very few plants had need to be replaced; none were defective in their formation; they were all accustomed to the scorching heat of the sun, and I tempered the effect of it on the soil where the plants were placed, by heaping flints around them which preserved a freshness even in the driest season. All those coffee plants offered the advan-

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the surface of the earth, leaving nothing but the stem.

The season for planting coffee is not very important in land which contains sufficient watery principles to perform the grand work of vegetation. But in general, it is most adviseable to plant shortly before the rains.

It is important to fruitfulness that the plants should be lopped off at a certain height, regulated by the quality of the soil. In the poorest land, they are trimmed at two feet and a half, and in the best, at four or five feet. The planters of Terra-Firma allow their plants, commonly, a height of only four feet.—They maintain, with reason, that a greater elevation renders the harvest of the coffee difficult and imperfect. This attention, however, is not general; for there are many who do not lop the plants at all, and who suffer them to have their full growth, which nature has fixed at from twenty-four to twenty-six feet.

Weeding.

The precautions necessary to be observed in planting the coffee would be useless if not followed by those required in freeing the plants from the quantity of herbs, which dispute with them the nutritious

tages of being handsomer, stronger, and yielding sooner than those of my neighbours, planted at the same time according to the ancient manner. I am assured also, that even now, these plantations, although neglected like all those of St. Domingo, are very beautiful. (*Memoire sur le Cafier*, read at the public sitting of the Lycee des Arts, le 30 pluviose, an 9, by M. Bruley, a member of that and several learned societies, colonial proprietor at St. Domingo.")

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matters and the principles of increase which they receive from the soil, the air and the light. The coffee plants need assistance to conquer these enemies of their existence, only during the first two years; for in proportion as their branches extend, they cover sufficient land to deprive the herbs of the air and light necessary to their propagation and increase. M. Bruley observes, very properly, that it is more recommendable, for preventing the reproduction of the herbs and the injury of the soil, to pull them up by hand rather than destroy them with the hoe.

Between the ranges of the young coffee plants, sufficient vegetables may be raised for the consumption of the plantation. The prudent planter never fails to avail himself of the advantage which a cultivated soil offers, for having all vegetables he has occasion for, without any further trouble than that of planting them.

Unless great contrarieties happen in the season or the soil, the coffee plants give a light crop in the second year, and are in full bearing in the third. Each plant yields according to the nature of the soil. At St. Domingo they calculate one pound to a plant; at Jamaica, one pound and a half; and at Terra-Firma, two pounds.

Several causes are injurious to the coffee harvest. Drought is one. The plant requires much rain, excepting during the time of blossoming, for then the rains destroy the flowers and all prospect of fruit. A too great quantity of cherries with which the tree is loaded, is another. The tree cannot furnish sufficient of the nourishing juices for this superabundance of fruit; a great many grains are therefore spoiled. Ano-

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ther cause is the quantity or weeds, which, through the negligence of the cultivator, usurp a part of the nourishment from the young coffee plants; they diminish the quantity of them, and singularly affect their quality. Insects, running vines of the nature of the misletoe, &c. fogs and hurricanes, injure also the cultivation of coffee.

Harvest.

We come now to speak of its harvest, an article the more important since the beauty, goodness, and price, of the coffee depends on the manner in which it is gathered and prepared. The process is simple and easy; it demands neither great talents, nor profound chemical information; it does not consist of a learned combination of matters, submitted to be analysed, or destined to change their form and acquire new properties.

All that is necessary is the knowledge how to collect, clean and dry the grain, without impairing any of those qualities which serve to augment its price and consumption, as nothing is requisite to attain this end but precision and very simple machines; attention, care and exactness are more than sufficient to form a good manufacturer of coffee. It must not be supposed, however, that this simplicity is so great, that it is impossible to prepare the coffee otherwise than well. This operation, like all the works of man, is subject to divers systems, and opposite opinions. We have not yet, and it is probable that we never shall have, a single art, whose principles and process are irrevocably recognized and observed by all those who cul-

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tivate it, and the fabrication of coffee is not sufficiently ancient in America, nor sufficiently diffused, nor conducted theoretically enough, to form an exception to this general rule. It is necessary, therefore, that experience should form by degrees the path which should conduct to its perfection. To this effect, it is peculiarly useful that the various modes followed, not only by the different colonial nations, but also by each planter, should be known, in order that their results, of which commerce can only judge, should decide to which mode preference should be given.

The country entitled to the highest rank in the culture of coffee, is Arabia Felix. Either from the superiority of its soil, or from the method observed there in preparing this article of produce, or perhaps from both, the coffee of this country commands three times the price of that of any other. The mere denomination of *Mocha coffee* commands this superiority. The preparation which it receives exacts, it is true, cares too minute and tedious to be entirely suitable to considerable plantations; but they are not, therefore, the less necessary to be known, that the principles may be adopted on which they are founded, and that they may be observed as far as localities will permit.

When the Arabian cultivator, says Mr. Bryan Edwards, sees that his coffee is ripe, he spreads large cloths over the trees, which he shakes from time to time to make the ripe cherries fall. He never pulls one grain of coffee with the hand, whatever appearance it may have of maturity. He considers none as ripe, but such as fall on lightly shaking the tree. This process, more or less rigorously ob-

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served, serves at least to confirm the principle, that perfect maturity is an essential requisite for obtaining good coffee.

The grains thus gathered are exposed to the sun on mats with their pulps, until they are perfectly dry; which requires a long time. Their dry envelope is then removed, by means of a large stone cylinder, and they are replaced in the sun; for the planters of Yemen are persuaded that the coffee is apt to ferment, as long as it retains any particle of humidity. It is then winnowed, and packed in bales for merchandize. This practice indicates, that the coffee can never be too dry.

The English in their colonies follow, nearly the same method that we observe in ours. As soon as the cherries of the coffee acquire a deep red colour, they are sufficiently ripe to be collected. The negroes employed in this work have a coarse linen bag, which is retained open by means of a hoop, placed in its mouth. It is suspended to the neck of the negro who gathers; and he empties it into a large basket. If the negro is in the least active, he can collect three bushels in a day. But he should not be hurried, lest, to accelerate his work, he should mingle green grains with those which are ripe. Each harvest is made in three jobs, because all the grains do not ripen together. At each time, those only are gathered which are perfectly mature. One hundred bushels of cherries, just from the tree, yield about one thousand pounds of saleable coffee.

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Mode of Drying.

The coffee is dried in two ways: the first is to place the cherries in the sun, in layers of four inches thick, on sloping terraces, or on inclined platforms.

They ferment in a few days, and the pulp discharges itself in the fermentation. The coffee is thus left until it is entirely dry, which is not in less than three weeks. The skin of the cherries already broken, is removed by mills made expressly for that purpose. In default of mills, recourse is had to mortars. The coffee, thus prepared, whatever be its quality, weighs five per cent more than that which has received a different preparation.

The other method is, to separate at once the grain of the coffee from the pulp. This is done by an appropriate mill, and they are left to soak in water for twenty-four hours. After this operation, the grain is placed in the sun, that it may be promptly and perfectly dried.

These two manners of preparing coffee have each many advocates and many opposers. The latter, perhaps, is the most advantageous, being the most expeditious, but there is no doubt but that the first best preserves the flavour of the coffee, particularly if attention be paid to prevent its too great fermentation on the terraces or platforms. This might easily be obviated by making the layer less thick, that is to say, in giving more room to the cherries which are to be dried.

It still remains to strip the grain of coffee from

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the pellicule, with which it is immediately covered, and which is called parchment. For this also, use is made of mills which art, animated by interest, is simplifying and perfecting every day.

Lastly, nothing further is wanting than to winnow the coffee mingled with the grindings and dust of the parchment. This is effected by mills, of which the mechanism varies according to circumstances and judgment. The coffee is then put in bags, and sent for sale to the nearest sea port.

Negligence of the Cultivators of Terra-Firma.

The Spaniards of eastern Terra-Firma do not bestow as much care on their coffee, as it receives from other nations. The disposition of nature, which seems inclined to give the Mocha coffee a dangerous rival in this country, so overwhelmed with her benefits, is thwarted by the carelessness of the Spanish planters. They particularly neglect the weeding of it; so much so, that the young plants have to struggle continually against the weeds which attack their existence.

The same negligence extends to their manner of gathering the coffee. The cherry which begins to redden, as well as that which is quite red, are indiscriminately gathered and delivered to the process of preparation, which is not itself exempt from defect.

But every thing announces that these evils will not be of long duration. As a proof of this, I will give

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the information which is propagated, the emulation which is established, the activity which revives, the interest which is revealed, and the laudable ambition which manifests itself.

Sugar.

The sugar is the prime article of commercial produce in all the colonies situated between the tropics. At Terra-Firma it enjoys only a secondary rank. There is very little, if any, exportation of it; for, if we except a few quintals of poor, coarse sugar, charged with all its molasses, which the Spaniards term *papelon*, and which is carried to the island of Curaçao for consumption, it may safely be asserted that, unless by chance, not one pound is exported. Not that there are not many sugar plantations spread throughout the province of Venezuela, but that all their revenues are consumed on the spot. The Spaniards are generally very fond of sweetmeats, and every thing composed of sugar; and the Spaniards of Terra-Firma, above all, have the greatest passion for sugar. All, without distinction of condition, fortune, or colour, make sugar the greatest article of consumption. An intoxicating beverage, called *guarapo*, is produced from the fermentation of sugar in water, and is so common in Terra-Firma, that all classes make use of it—particularly those of an inferior rank. This custom gives rise to a great demand for sugar.

The most important part of a rich man's repast is confectionary. In a banquet, the desert is the sea

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vice on which all his ostentation is lavished. I have partaken of repasts given to forty or fifty persons, where more than three hundred dishes of sugars, in every form and shape, where tastefully arranged on a different table from that where we had been served with meats, and were destined to captivate the admiration of the guests. To sum up all in one word, there is not a negro, whether slave or free who, though perhaps restricted to but one meal per day, does not make it with a little cacao, boiled in a great deal of water, and a large lump of coarse sugar, which he eats like bread, sipping and relishing his porringer of chocolate, or rather tincture of cacao. This beverage is called *chorote*. However small the quantity of cacao mingled therein, its universal usage cannot but contribute considerably to the consumption of that article. In fact by calculations within bounds, it is estimated that they consume, within the sole province of Venezuela, forty thousand quintals of cacao per annum, and much more of sugar.

Land proper for the Cultivation of the Sugar Cane.

The variety and extent of land in the provinces of Carracas, readily afford soil proper for the cultivation of the sugar cane. Establishments of this kind are generally in the environs of towns, because there the sugar finds a vent, and the proximity of them facilitates cultivation. There are some, however, at twenty leagues distance; but in a

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country so vast, where some planters have ten or twelve days travelling before they reach their plantations, the distance of twenty leagues appears moderate.

The sugar cane delights in hot climates,* and particular soils. Humid soils, hills, sandy plains, such as those to the north of the Oronoko, in the environs of Coro, Maracaïbo, &c. promise no success to this species of culture.

* The sugar cane gives incontestibly the preference to hot countries: there are in fact none too hot for it? but it may be had also, with all its properties, in the temperate zone as far north as the tropic of Cancer. In Spain it is cultivated with success in the kingdom of Grenada, situated between the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth degrees of northern latitude. It can be cultivated much farther north, since at Paris they have obtained sugar well christalized, from canes reared in the garden of plants.

M. de Cosigny, proprietor in the isle of France, member of several learned societies, and of the agricultural society of Paris, on his return from a voyage made in 1801, to the isle of France, brought several sugar canes with him, which is care had preserved in good condition. He gave them to the garden of plants at Paris with the sole intention of augmenting the nomenclature of exotic plants. Necessary precautions were taken to preserve them from cold. But on the 31st of May, 1804, M. de Cosigny having judged from the appearance of the canes which they had produced, that they contained the saccharine particles, in as great proportion as the canes of the torrid zone, and equally easy to be extracted, requested and obtained them from M. Trouin, administrating professor of the museum of natural history.

Those canes were cut to the number of fifteen, and after having lopped off their tops, it was found that the smallest was six

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The sugar cane requires a rich soil, and of which the mould is at least one foot in depth. It should also be free, for clayed land, and all others where the water filtrates with difficulty, yield meagre canes, the sugar of which will not defray the expense of their cultivation. The sugar prefers rather a fat and ash-coloured soil. Land of this double quality, always yields a great deal of very handsome sugar. It must be admitted, that the planters of Terra-Firma are well skilled in distinguishing the kind of soil which each production demands. The quality of their different articles of produce is an indisputable proof thereof.

feet in height, and that one of them was twelve, They weighed thirty-nine pounds twelve ounces, which, by means of two pressings, rendered nineteen pounds one ounce, an uncommon yield. The colour of that of the first pressing, was greenish, and gave nine degrees to the areometer of salts. The second pressing is made, by adding water to the husks of the canes: this juice weighed a little less than four degrees.

M. de Cossigny submitted the first juice to the process of fabrication, at the house of Messieurs Boume and Margueron, apothecaries, rue Saint Honore, where in presence of experienced men, assembled for this purpose, they made sugar, similar in every respect to that which is made in our colonies, excepting that it was a little fat, because the canes were produced in a soil too much manured. The thirty-nine pounds twelve ounces of juice, gave about twenty-four ounces of handsome powder sugar.

This invaluable experiment, honourable to the zeal and talents of it author, may induce individuals, in the southern departments, to profit of the most suitable exposures for cultivating the sugar cane.

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All the sugar plantations of Terra-Firma were sown with the same cane as our colonies, until in 1796, they brought from Trinidad the plant of the cane of Otaheite, of which they soon perceived so clearly the advantage, that every one hastened to substitute it in place of the ancient cane.

It cannot be disputed that every appearance is in favour of the cane of Otaheite; it is, at least, double the size of the other cane, and is much higher; it consequently contains much more juice. As its planting, its treatment, and the cutting of it, do not occasion more labour than the Creole cane, the result is, that in the same time, and with the same lands, an augmentation of revenue is obtained.

It ripens, in the same season, much sooner than the cane of the country; while this has need of sixteen months, the former ripens in twelve; by this also is gained one quarter of the revenue. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to ascertain, whether the suckers will yield in the proportion of the parent cane, and how many times they may be cut, before transplanted.

The enthusiasm which has prevailed among the planters for this cane, has prevented them from perceiving any except its good qualities. They are silent on its defects; but time will teach them, that the sugar obtained from the cane of Otaheite, contains infinitely less of the essential salt, than that yielded by the ancient cane. Three pounds of the

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former scarcely sugars as much as two pounds of the latter; there is, therefore, a real loss of thirty-three and a third per cent. which commerce in Europe does not fail to deduct from the price. Sixty francs, for example, is offered for a quintal of the sugar of the cane of Otaheite while ninety is given for that of the Creole cane. To this loss must be added the carting, freight, and storage, of a quintal of this sugar, although it does not represent more than the value of sixty-six pounds and two-thirds of ordinary sugar, and it will be perceived that its pretended advantages, which are exaggerated, will scarcely compensate the losses which are passed over in silence. Nor is this all; this sugar, abounding more in mucilage than in essential salt, is susceptible of but a feeble consistence, which is far from insuring it from decomposition, during the time of its exportation to Europe, and of its storage until the time of sale, or to the place of a second exportation. This sugar, therefore, cannot be denominated a produce truly commercial;* it is, at most, proper for consumption in the same

* It is about four years since M. Hapel de Lachennaye, chemist, commissioned by the government to Guadaloupe, announced to the agricultural society at Paris, that he had discovered the means of giving to the sugar, proceeding from the canes of Otaheite, the consistence necessary for preventing the decomposition to which it is subject. He did not make his method known.—The most natural is to augment its degree of boiling, but this is not done except at the expence of the quantity and quality of the sugar; for the concentration of it necessarily diminishes the quantity, and renders it less proper to receive the benefits of claying. If his method is different, and does not produce these effects, such discovery does him infinite honour.

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places where it is manufactured; and its value will necessarily diminish in proportion as the use of it increases, since its comparative defects will then be more clearly perceived. All these reasons I am assured, determined several planters of the island of Cuba, who had adopted the cane of Otaiheite, to resume the cultivation of the Creole cane, fully resolved to make no further experiments on this article. The eyes of the inhabitants of Terra-Firma are not so readily opened, because, selling their sugar in the province, interest will not give them any alarm, until the consumer shall have known the difference which exists between these two kinds of sugar.

Planting of the Sugar-Cane.

The sugar cane is propagated by itself. When it is cut to be passed through the mill, they lop off about one foot from its top, for the purpose of planting. The place assigned for the plantation, is then marked out into squares, something like our gardens, that by planting them successively, the canes of each square may ripen in the same order, allowing time to each to be cut and the sugar fabricated, without the other canes suffering. The French call these squares *pieces de cannes*, they are generally of four squares; the English divide them by fifteen and twenty acres, which they call *plats*; the Spaniards of Terra Firma make their divisions of a hundred vares* square, each vare of thirty-one inches three-tenths of a French foot, and they call them *tablones*; at Havanna they make them double and call them *canaverales*, which

* A French measure.

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signifies also a piece of ground covered with sugar canes.

That time is chosen for planting of the sugar cane, when, according to the order of the seasons, rain may be expected. This choice is particularly observed where there is not a facility of irrigation: for the assistance of water is essential to the perfect germination of the plant. Without water the cane does not thrive, nor does it ever acquire, even though favoured by the season, that degree of vigour and that saccharine juice for which it is remarked when properly watered either by art or nature.

For planting the cane holes are made with a hoe; which are fifteen inches long, ten wide, and six deep. In this work, which is the most laborious appertaining to the sugar plantation, only male negroes and the most robust negresses are employed. Each slave can make, in ordinary ground, from sixty to eighty of these holes in a day; but if the ground has been previously ploughed, as is practised at Jamaica, a negro can make double the number.

The distance between the holes must be determined by the nature of the soil. During a long time it was believed that they should be nearer each other in proportion as the soil was richer; because the earth having more nutricious juices could nourish a greater number of plants. This opinion was specious, but was soon exchanged for one more philosophical; and it has been perceived that when the canes are too crowded, they must reciprocally impede each other's growth and maturity. Depriving themselves by this near approach of air and light, the two most potent

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agents of their existence and vigour; they always present the aspect of abortions in place of thriving canes. It is sufficient to apply to poor and meagre land those principles which have been applied to ground of a fertile nature. The conclusion follows that the canes should be planted distant in proportion to the fecundity of the soil: thus, in the poorest land they are planted three feet apart, and six feet in the richest.

Although the holes have only been made to the depth of six inches, yet the earth which has been dug out, being left on the edges, they appear to have a depth of more than a foot. Three cane plants are laid in each hole, and they are covered with only three inches of earth and without pressure. This is the business of children, or of hands belonging to the plantation, who are only capable of light work. The residue of the earth is left on the side of the pit, so that persons unacquainted with these labours would imagine the plantation not yet made.

When the plantation is in marshy ground, where there is apprehension that the plant will rot, care is taken not to *lay* the cane in the pit. One end of it only is put to the bottom of the pit, and the plant is placed in an inclined position, so that from four to five inches are above the ground. This is called planting *en canon*, because the plant resembles a canon pointed. I am far from recommending plantations of this kind; they never pay the expences they occasion.

If it is determined absolutely to force nature, by establishing a sugar plantation on marshy ground, which will cost immense labour before it becomes productive, prudence and interest require that the

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ground should be previously drained. If the want of a declivity form an insuperable obstacle, one expedient remains, more tedious, yet still more advantageous to the land. Let the rain water be drawn from all parts and collected upon the soil intended to be drained: having deposited the earthy particles with which it was charged, and become clear, it should be released by opening the sluices, and this operation should be repeated according as the rains permit. This process unites the double advantage of elevating the soil, and of producing a bed of vegetable earth, from which it derives peculiar fecundity. This kind of land is always too vigorous for the sugar cane. The plant acquires an astoishning increase, but is so watery, that the most skilful refiner is unable to obtain sugar from it. This defect is corrected by planting the ground with rice for two successive years. The planting of rice has the singular and double advantage of elevating the land by the stocks it leaves, and of subduing it by drawing off the subtile juices. When the rice ceases to be productive, the sugar cane replaces it very advantageously. This method of correcting marshy grounds, through the assistance of rain water, is doubtly serviceable to lands in the neighbourhood of the sea, because it frees them at the same time from those saline particles which are unfriendly to vegetation. Let us return to our plant.

Weeding.

At the end of five days or more, or ten at the utmost, the young cane shows itself under the form of

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a single stalk, which is divided in a few days, into two small, slender and opposite leaves. In proportion as the young plant increases, it puts forth two leaves in the same order with the first. At this period it requires rain, or artificial watering. It soon becomes indispensably necessary to remove the weeds, which would otherwise choke it; and the application of the hoe must be two or three times repeated, until the cane becomes sufficiently strong to choke, in turn, every strange plant. On each weeding attention should be given to cover the young plant with part of the earth, left on the edges of each hole at the time of planting.

Maturity and Qualities of the Cane.

The sugar cane ripens according to the season it experiences: rains retard, drought accelerates its maturity. Much depends also on the nature of the soil. In rich and moist lands the cane does not ripen under sixteen or seventeen months, while in a light soil, it ripens two months earlier. In the ninth month, the plant begins to cast its leaves. Those nearest the foot of the cane fall first, and the others in succession; so that by the time the plant arrives at maturity, the cluster of leaves which terminates it, alone remains.

At the same time the cane assumes a yellow colour, an infallible sign of the good quality of the sugar it contains. It is not thus with the canes of marshy lands, and hollows or bottoms; they retain the green colour, whatever may be their age, and thus announce to the refiner the difficulty he will experience in obtaining the sugar.

The distance of the joints furnishes also a certain

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criterion to determine the quality of the cane: in proportion as they are nearer to each other, the plant is inferior. It is of importance in the manufacture of sugar, to take the cane at the true point of its maturity. Before this period it will yield much water, and but little sugar. If it is over ripe, a much smaller quantity of sugar is obtained than the cane would yield if taken at the proper time; the manufacture will also be more difficult and the quality inferior. Accidents too often render it necessary to pass canes which are not ripe to the mill: for instance, when a fire consumes all that is combustible in a field of canes, or when a furious hurricane has beat down the canes, already too far advanced too admit the hope that they will rise again. It is in these cases more prudent to make nothing but syrup: the attempt to make sugar may be fruitless; and the process of the fabrication may occupy so much time that a great portion of the canes will become heated to such a degree as no longer to yield even syrup.

Cutting the Cane—Shoots.

The sugar cane should be cut with a bill, *(serpe)* very near the root and at a small distance from the cluster of leaves at the summit. A piece of the tender part of the cane, near the summit, is then retained for the purpose of planting. After the large canes, or the first which proceed from the plant, are removed, the young shoots are left, and require only weeding, and fair weather. Good land furnishes as many as five crops of shoots—that is to say, one may cut a plantation of canes five times without replanting.

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At each cutting, however, the quantity of sugar is less. A piece of cane of four squares which yields at the first cutting seven hundred forms of rough sugar, each weighing fifty-four pounds, will only give from its first shoots six hundred forms; the second shoots five hundred, the third four hundred and twenty, and so on in like proportion. In bad ground the disproportion is much greater. The second shoots in such plantations rarely yield half the quantity furnished at the first cutting by the large canes. They are therefore replanted as often as the strength of the establishment will permit.

Time of grinding the Cane.

The season of the year in which the cane is cut, influences much the quantity of sugar obtained from it. During November and the four succeeding months, it yields a third more sugar than in the other seven months. This rule is general, but varies in particular places. In the northern part of St. Domingo, much advantage results from grinding, or making sugar in the season I have named, but without the difference being so great as to prevent its manufacture during the rest of the year. In the western and southern parts of the same island, all the labour of the plantation, that relates to the grinding or manufacture of the sugar, is exclusively performed in the good season. In Terra-Firma they manufacture sugar during the whole of the year; but there, as in the other places, the five months I have mentioned are preferred.

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The labours of the sugar plantation must be so distributed that the different operations go on at the same time; while some negroes cut the canes, others convey them to the mill, where they are ground as fast as they arrive. The juice extracted from the cane, is immediately subjected to the process for converting it into sugar. Every thing must be done at once. If the sugar cane is not pressed as soon as cut, it undergoes a fermentation, which affects the saccharine parts, rendering the manufacture very difficult, and the results less favourable. If the juice of the cane be not exposed to the fire as soon as expressed, it contracts a degree of acidity, which greatly embarrasses the refiner. The French colonists are so well convinced of the celerity requisite in these different operations, that from the moment when they begin to cut the cane, the labours of the plantation continue night and day. The negroes are divided into four companies or relievers, like sailors in the navigation of a vessel, and there is no intermission except on sunday.

Nature of the Mills.

The mill for expressing the canes is composed of three iron cylinders. One in the centre, to which the moving power is applied, turns the other two, by means of teeth, of iron or wood, at the upper parts of the three cylinders. These mills are worked by water or by mules. The former unites the valuable advantages of celerity and economy of animals.—One water-mill, constructed with accurate dimensions will furnish, in twenty-four hours, sufficient juice of

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the cane for a hundred and sixty forms of rough sugar, each weighing fifty-four pounds; unless poverty of soil, or an unfriendly season should present impediments. A mill worked with mules, in whatever manner it may be conducted, will not furnish more than half the quantity. Those sugar-works in Terra Firma which deserve the name of manufacturies, have all water-mills. It would be unpardonable, in a country so well watered, not to apply to this use that fluid which is every where to be obtained, and in as great quantities as can be desired. The dependency of Caraccas is indebted for many of its water-mills to a mill-wright named Dupont, a creole of Martinique, whom the events of the revolution cast on these strange and distant shores in 1791. His works are far from being models of perfection, but the quantity of water that can be furnished in this country to these machines, is competent to correct all geometrical defects, provided the true mechanic structure be observed.

Manufacture of Sugar.

The juice of the cane passes directly from the mill, through a canal, into a large basin which is placed in the sugar works, by the largest of five cauldrons. The collective name of these cauldrons, which are of different sizes, is *equipage*. The first cauldron, called *la grande*, because it is the largest, is usually fifty-four inches in diameter; the second is named *la propre*; the third, *le flambeau*;

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the fourth, *le sirop;* the fifth, *la batterie.* It is in the latter that the sugar receives the last degree of boiling.

These cauldrons are placed in the same line, and by the side of each other: they are fixed in masonwork over a stove or kiln, the focus of which is under that called *la batterie,* and from which a canal passes beneath the five cauldrons, allowing the smoke to escape through a chimney by the side of the largest. The *equipage,* consisting of these cauldrons, is in general placed behind the wall of the sugar house.—But a short time previous to the revolution they began to adopt a method of erecting the *equipage* in the middle of the sugar house, with a view to employ two skimmers at each cauldron, and to disengage the sugar more promptly and completely from all heterogeneous articles. To *equipages* of this kind, they adapted *two batteries* situated after the cauldron called *le sirop,* and in such manner that each could have a stove or furnace under it, that the fire might be nourished by two mouths, and the boiling of the sugar hastened; for the experience of a century has proved that the sugar is handsomer in proportion to the violence of the ebullition. Modern chemistry will therefore, have much difficulty in communicating to our colonies its apprehension lest a portion of the sugar should be burnt in the cauldrons in which the syrup is boiled; and its advice, to effect the evaporation with less fire, will not be followed. Every thing is employed, on the contrary, to augment the action of the fire in the sugar-houses. An *equipage* is well or ill made, a furnace or stove, more or less

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perfect, in proportion as they facilitate the ebullition. To favour this operation still more, they employ for fuel the leaves which the canes cast off in ripening, and which have dried on the places where they fell. The *bagasse* (or cane which has passed through the mill and become dry) is employed also for the same purpose. It is observed that a good workman obtains with the leaves and the *bagasse* a fire much more violent and more equal than that obtained with wood. There is also an advantage attending this kind of fuel, as the action of the fire can be moderated at pleasure. At the moment when the attendant ceases to throw this fuel into the stove the violence of the heat is necessarily diminished, and this is very useful with regard to the just degree of boiling.

As soon as the boiling is sufficient, the fire is checked, that the sugar may be removed, without experiencing more ebullition at its own expense. This advantage cannot be obtained with wood of any kind; for it deposits in the furnace a bed of ardent coals, which maintains the violence of the fire much longer than is necessary, and reduces to a candied state, that part of the sugar which is more immediately at the bottom of the cauldron.

On Terra-Firma, where wood alone is used to manufacture sugar, they calculate the boiling, by including that which the sugar will acquire during its removal; but this estimate requires an accuracy of judgment so rarely met with, that the sugar most frequentl either wants the requisite degree of boiling, or has exceeded it. In employing for fuel the leaves or straw, and the *bagasses*, or cane that has passed

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the mill, these inconveniences are avoided, and the labour of negrs whom the Spaniards employed to cut and transport the wood, is saved. Besides, when the season prents the providing of wood, the grinding is necessary suspended, and all the works suffer: while, wh good stores of *bagasse*, these extraordinary labors may be saved, and at any time of the year the one may be cut, and the sugar manufactured.

Constituent Parts of Sugar.

Before we speak of the process by which sugar is extracted from the *vesou*, or juice of the cane, it will be proper to notice the nature of its constituent parts. But how shall we decide a question on which there is so much difference of opinion? Chemistry, that science founded upon facts, whose problems, aided by demonstration, rank as truths—chemistry will be long involved in doubts and conjectures with regard to sugar.

Some chemists maintain that the heterogeneous materials of sugar are a fecula, or sediment, an extract, and a colouring matter, which become separated by evaporation. Others think that it is only necessary to obtain by simple evaporation and the action of fire, a diminution of the water and a reunion of the particles of sugar thus facilitating the coagulation and separation of the feculæ and the colouring matter.

There are some who consider sugar as a saline substance, and as holding a middle station between mucilage and essential salts.

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English planters reckon in its compition eight parts of water, one of sugar, and one of ick oil and mucilaginous gum, with a portion of ential oil; and it is on these principles that they mfacture sugar.

French colonists merely suppose at the juice or *vesou* is composed of a great portionf superabundant water which evaporates by ebulion, and some acids or mucilages, from which it is ecessary to disengage the saccharine part. To proce neutralization, they oppose to these acids a proortionate quantity of alkali, in order that the efferescence made by the alkali with the acid, assisted by ebullition, may exhibit them under the form of a aponaceous scum, which is removed with skimmersmade for that purpose.

Whether or not this system acords with the great principles of chemistry, it is certan that by observing it the French colonists obtain a sugar, which, for chrystalization and whiteness, defies rivalship in the markets of Europe.

Use of Lye or Alkali.

The agents employed to alkalize the juice of the cáne, are quick-lime, ashes, potash, &c. they have not found any vegetable alkali to produce as good effects. Some, however, of the systematic colonists have chosen to depart from the customary usage, through an expectation to attract public attention by some useful discovery. But their experiments have generally been made at the expense of their interests; and, according to the docility or obstinacy of their

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characters, they have sooner or later resumed that method which self-love had induced them to abandon. The only allowable variation is, according to the nature of the soil, to complete the alkalization with potash in the cauldron called *flambeau*, or in that called *sirop*, after quick-lime has already extracted the greatest part of the mucilages and other heterogeneous articles.

The ashes of common wood injure materially the quality of the sugar: rendering it brown, without chrystals and without consistence.

It is some time since an inhabitant of Jamaica fell on a plan of alkalizing sugar with the ashes of the pimento tree, of fern, or of campeachy wood. The advantages resulting from this method were verified, published, and compensated by the colonial assembly. It decreed to M. Bousie, author of the discovery, the sum of 1000 pounds sterling. The use of lime was on the point of experiencing a disgraceful proscription, when it was ascertained by commerce that sugar alkalized in this manner would not bear the sea; because these ashes evidently impeded the intimate union of the particles. Lime recovered therefore the consideration it had began to lose, and the system of M. Bousie obtained only from public generosity a publication, in which it was declared that lime and ashes might be conjointly employed, provided the refiner was skilful in combining them.

It is from the just proportion of the alkali to the heterogeneous parts, that we must hope for the handsomest sugar. The great art of the refiner is therefore to ascertain this point. The nature of the canes

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which furnished the juice, the lands in which they were cultivated, and the season which prevailed during their maturity, announce that a greater or less degree of alkali is necessary. The appearance, odour, and taste of the juice itself, indicate also whether little or much alkali is required. But these signs are merely approximative. They only become precise and infallible in the course of the manufacture; and as it is infinitely more easy to correct defects arising from too little than from too much lime, the refiner uses at first but two-thirds of the quantity that he thinks requisite for perfect saturation. The lime is thrown into the first or great cauldron, the liquid being cold. The juice is slightly agitated, that the lime may be equally diffused. A conflict presently ensues between the alkali and the acid or mucilaginous parts; and these are thrown by the strong ebullition to the surface under the form of a scum, in which the eye and the touch recognize saponaceous properties.

Removal of the Scum.

One negro at least to each cauldron, is constantly employed in removing the scum, and frequently one is not sufficient. The skimmer performs without dispute, the most important part in the manufacture of sugar. From his activity results the good or bad quality. All the other conditions necessary to produce handsome sugar will be of no avail, if it is badly skimmed. This operation is begun in the cauldron, called *propre*; sometimes, but rarely, in the *grande*.

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Prognostics.

The scum is at first of blackish hue, and extremely thick, but in consequence of being removed it acquires a more yellow colour. When it adheres to the skimmer, and the ebullition is large, dilatory and of dull hue, the alkali is judged insufficient. The quantity of lime is then augmented by degrees, till this indication is no longer furnished.

The juice or *vesou* is poured from the *grande* into the *propre*, where it experiences an ebullition of half an hour, during which time the skimmer is constantly passed over its surface; it is thence emptied into the *flambeau*, where it is skimmed anew. From that cauldron it is passed into the *sirop* where it remains till it gives unequivocal signs of cleanliness, and is then removed to the *batterie*, in which nothing is necessary but to complete the boiling: so that the successive decantation from one cauldron to the other, furnishes signs that the syrup is sufficiently clean to be admitted to the *batterie*.

When, on the contrary, the scum passes easily through the holes of the skimmer, and the ebullition is small, it indicates an excess of alkali, by which the quality of the sugar will be affected. It will neither have the whiteness nor the grain it would otherwise have possessed. This defect is imperfectly remedied by adding fresh and unalkalized juice of the cane, that it may become charged with part of the superabundant alkali. But, the evil can only be palliated; it cannot be completely removed.

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It often happens that the canes have not sufficient water to hold them in solution till the scum is completely extracted. When the refiner perceives that the scum continues foul, and that the juice of the cane acquires too rapidly a consistence unfavourable to its developement, he throws more water into the cauldron to prolong the dissolution. The ebullition or bubbles of a middling size, well detached and sparkling, a balsamic odour from the cauldrons termed *flambeau* and *sirop*, are certain signs of the good quality of the sugar, and its good manufacture. When the bubbles in the *batterie* are large, excessively agitated, and make explosions, we must expect sugar of bad quality, which incrustates with difficulty, or not at all. The excessive quantity of water, which the process of the manufacture has not been able to carry off, holds it in a state of liquidity, and condemns it to remain syrup.

Boiling the Sugar.

The talent of boiling sugar well is very highly appreciated in the colonies, as on the just degree of it depends the ultimate fate of the article. If the boiling be too violent, a part of the essential salt burns and diminishes the quantity, and the excessive union (or consolidation) of the particles resists the process of claying; for the molasses which it is necessary to extract, in whitening, forms with the sugar, a substance which the water used in purification cannot penetrate. If the boiling is too feeble, the incrustation of the sugar is imperfect, and the water used in

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claying, not finding the necessary resistance, carries off much of the sugar in the form of syrup. Each form of rough sugar weighs, in the French colonies, fifty-four pounds. It is reduced to forty-one or forty-two by the process of claying; but if the sugar is not sufficiently boiled, and the process of claying is attempted in the same manner as though it had been well boiled, it is reduced to thirty-two or thirty-three pounds. For this reason, when it is intended to sell the sugar in its rough state, it must receive a greater degree of boiling than when it is to be clayed.

The mode of ascertaining the boiling of the sugar is simple and infallible. One of the large copper ladles, used to decant the juice, is plunged into the *batterie*, and immediately withdrawn. By the quantity of the syrup which adheres to the sides of the ladle, the degree of thickness is perceived. When this sign indicates that the point of boiling approaches, the ladle is replunged, and as much of the article taken from the back of it as the thumb can carry:—the index, or fore-finger, is then applied to this portion of the liquid; at the same time the thumb is dropped and the index elevated. The syrup forms a thread which should break when the fingers are two inches apart, and retire on itself in form of a cork-screw, toward the matter remaining on the thumb. This is called with reason, *the proof*, for there is in fact none better. Physicians have desired to substitute instruments to which they have in vain guaranteed infallibility; for the results are erroneous according to the different nature of the cane which produced the sugar. They have finally been compelled

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to admit that chance has procured for the colonists a criterion superior to any that art is able to invent. The unexperienced refiner does not at first accommodate himself to this mode of graduating the boiling, because it offends the delicate skin of his fingers; but, as he advances, the skin hardens, and becomes so callous as to experience no pain. A refiner of the colonies may be easily recognized, merely by inspecting the thumb and finger of his right hand, in like manner as they detect disguised sailors in England, by the callous skin on the palms of their hands.

The feebleness of the boiling is known by the difficulty with which the thread forms; its excess, by the difficulty with which the thread retires, when broken.

As soon as the desired indication is obtained, the fire is checked and the sugar promptly drawn off.—Two negroes, and sometimes three, each having a ladle of ten or twelve feet, empty the sugar, at once, into a cauldron placed under the ground of the sugar-house by the side of the *batterie*.

Crystalization of Sugar.

After half an hour the sugar is stirred in this new cauldron, that it may granulate equally: for this purpose, a wooden spatula, nearly three feet long, called *mouveron*, is used. The sugar is presently removed from this cauldron to another, larger and more distant from the *equipage*, where it is left till it forms an ice or crust, a line in thickness. This crust shows both the quality of the sugar, and the degree of

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boiling. If it be green toward the centre, the sugar is not good: if it be too friable, or brittle, the sugar is too much boiled; if not sufficiently so, the boiling has been too feeble. The just point of boiling has been acquired, when on applying the hand lightly to the crust, it bends and resumes its level. If it break too easily, the boiling was in excess; if it do not resume the level, the boiling was deficient.

Putting the Sugar in Moulds or Forms.

While the sugar is in this cauldron, large earthen moulds or forms are placed in the sugar-house, at a distance from the *equipage*, having been kept two or three hours in water and well washed. They are placed beside each other, the point down, the hole at the point being carefully closed with a stopper of straw. As many forms are employed as are supposed sufficient to contain the matter that has been boiled: the sugar is then put in them while still liquid. This operation has also its particular mode. For this purpose a copper pan with two handles, and of convenient form is employed, called *bec de corbin*. It contains nearly four pots of liquid, and is filled with the article to be transposed. The negro who performs this task is careful not to empty the *bec de corbin* into one mould; but to distribute it among several, so that they may be filled at the same time. This precaution is necessary, that the liquid part of the sugar may not be contained in some forms, and all the grain in others, but that the distribution may be perfectly equal.

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Stirring the Sugar.

After an hour has elapsed, the sugar in the moulds, still in a state of liquefaction, requires another stirring not less essential than the preceding. The object is to remove the grain of the sugar which has adhered through its own weight, to the bottom and sides of the mould; and to divide it equally throughout the mould, precisely at the moment when the cooling of the contents gives to the sugar such consistence as will prevent the grain from precipitating anew. The success to be expected from this operation, depends entirely on the moment in which it is performed. It is called *mouver le sucre*, stirring the sugar. If the sugar be too warm, it disturbs the harmony of the formation of the grain, and removes without advantage that which is deposited at the bottom, and on the sides, to the mould. If it be too cold, it has already become too thick to answer the wish of the refiner.

Practice has furnished a means of seizing the instant in which the sugar should be stirred. The refiner plunges the spatula to the bottom of the mould and leaves it to rise alone. According to the rapidity or slowness with which it reascends, he judges that it is too soon or too late. Quickness indicates that it is not yet time; slowness shews that the time is past. A just medium announces the precise moment.

He who performs the operation of stirring, should apply the spatula to the sides, and remove it directly to the middle of the mould. The grain is thus detached from the sides, and distributed throughout the form.

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Signs of good Manufacture, during the cooling of the Sugar.

The sugar in cooling forms a crust on the surface, more or less thick, the middle of which presently sinks, leaving a kind of circle adhering to the mould which resembles a plate with the bottom out. This circle is called *collet*, or collar. It should be about three inches in size, to satisfy the wishes of the refiner. If the circle is narrower, it is a proof that the sugar has not been sufficiently boiled, and the reverse if the circle is large. This crust is called fountain, *fontaine*, because there is a hole in the centre, where there always remains a little syrup, that has not been crystalized: it furnishes also proof with regard to the quantity of alkali employed. If this crust is fat, and the hand on being applied to it comes off with more or less mucilage, it is a proof that the sugar has not received sufficient lime. If, on the contrary, the crust is dry and brittle, lime has been used in excess. The colour of the crust furnishes at once two indications, with respect to the boiling and the alkali. A handsome golden colour announces that the sugar has been well manufactured, and well boiled, a pale yellow, discloses the deficiency of alkali, and of boiling; dark yellow shows the excess of both.

When the sugar is perfectly cold, the forms, or moulds, are removed from the sugar-house to the place of purification, where they are placed on large earthen pots, with narrow openings, called *canaris*. But, previously, the stopper of straw which closed the opening at the point of the form is not only removed,

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but the contents is also pierced with a peg or pin a foot and half in length, which is immediately withdrawn. This is called piercing the form. The hole thus made must be exactly in the centre, that the water of terrage or claying may filtre equally through all parts of the form, and give it a uniform whiteness. If it be not pierced in the centre, the water proceeds to the vacancy; the side of the form toward which the whole inclines receiving the fluid intended for the whole form: the sugar itself is therefore carried away by the weight of the water, and becomes full of crevices; while the opposite side, deprived of the water it should receive, remains black, without experiencing any advantages from the claying. The same inconveniences occur to the form which has not been placed perfectly perpendicular on the *canari*. The side inclined receives all the water, and that opposite retains its molasses.

Claying the Sugar.

The sugar is left to drain on the *canaris*, during five or six days; after which it undergoes the process of claying *(terrage)*. The whole of the fountain, or crust on the surface, is removed. The sugar is well mixed with a kind of trowel, and a layer of sugar already blanched is placed on it, which is united with it as well as can be effected without pressure. The vacancy of about two inches, remaining in the form or mould, is then filled with a paste of black earth, well divided. The water which drains from this earth penetrates throughout the form; and conveys with

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it into the *canari* all the molasses to be carried off. When this earth becomes dry, water is poured on it. This is called giving it a refreshment. The sugar generally receives two supplies of earth, and to each two refreshments.

Manner of drying the Sugar.

After the last earth is removed, the sugar is left to drain during twelve days. A fine day is then chosen for exposing it to the sun, from ten until three o'clock. For this purpose it is removed from the form or mould. This is called *locher le sucre*, loosening the sugar. The form is placed on straw, with the small end uppermost; it is then struck with both hands, so gently as not to break the form or bruise the sugar, but with sufficient force to detach it. This generally happens about the third or fourth stroke. The sugar is exposed to the sun, that it may acquire a consistence which will bear handling, without being broken. After three o'clock it is carried to the stove. This is a building of masonry, twenty feet square, more or less, and thirty feet high, without other opening than a small door which closes hermetically, and which opens into the *pugeries*, or place of purification. It bears some resemblance in form to a tower of our country steeples. In one of the exterior sides there is an opening two feet square, even with the ground, to which is adapted, in masonry, a canopy of beaten iron, of which all the cavity is within the stove. In this place the fire and the wood are put, which it is necessary to nourish both day and

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night. The smoke escapes by the same avenue, through which the fuel is supplied, in order that it may not penetrate the stove. The heat is kept up to the fortieth or fiftieth degree of Reaumur's thermometer. In the interior three or four stages of boards, arranged in the form of a grate or lattice are prepared, on which the sugar is placed. Twelve or fifteen days are sufficient to give it a solidity which it will retain two or three years, provided it is preserved from water and excessive humidity.

When the sugar is removed from the stove, it is broken or pounded, put up in hogsheads, and delivered in commerce.

Boiling the Syrup.

The syrup which drains from the forms into the *canaris*, undergoes a new action of fire, and furnishes sugar, more porous than the former, but almost equally marketable; and it passes through the same process of claying. From the syrup which again results, another sugar of inferior quality is produced: finally, the last syrup is sold to distillers for the purpose of making rum.

Proceedings of the Spanish Refiners.

It is very necessary that the Spaniards of the eastern parts of Terra-Firma should pursue the same order as the French, in the operations relative to sugar. Ashes form the greatest part of the alkali they employ. Hence it happens, that, notwithstanding the rich-

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ness of soil, their sugar never equals that of the French colonies, either in crystalization or whiteness. Their manner of claying is equally exceptionable. The earth, not being well divided, does not compel the water to filter through with sufficient slowness; but allows it on the contrary, to escape so rapidly, that it carries off in its course much of the sugar, which falls with the syrup. This prejudice is the more remarkable, as I do not know one individual who boils again, even the grosser or first syrup. Their places of purification, far from presenting, like those of the French, the agreeable aspect of a parterre well kept, resemble receptacles of filth, into which one cannot enter without being mired in the syrup. They do not use *canaris*, but place the forms of sugar, destined for blanching, on a kind of plank elevated four feet. Each line of forms discharges the syrup into a canal of wood, which conducts it to a basin in which all the canals empty. It has been observed to me, that this saves the expense of *canaris*, and of transporting the syrup to the general reservoir, but I insist, that by this proceeding they lose more in syrup than the price of the *canaris*. Besides, the cleanliness of a building, where the eye may contemplate the products of the culture, without the pleasure being disturbed by the disgusting sight of the filth from the syrup, should certainly be taken into calculation.

Their mode of drying the sugar also, is far from presenting the same advantages as ours. They spread the sugar upon an elevated platform, covered by a grooved roof. In fair weather they shove aside the roof, and the sugar receives the drying rays of the sun. Excepting at such times, the roof is not re-

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moved, and the sugar has time to regain during the rains, or from the dampness of the nights, that humidity which a few hours of the sun had imbibed.—These transitions from dry to damp and from damp to dry, cannot but destroy the grain of the sugar, and prevent it from acquiring the consistence necessary to render it durable.

In general, the fabrication of sugar at Terra-Firma, and, above all, the claying, are, and will naturally be a long time behind hand, because interest dictates to sell as sugar, a mass composed of all the molasses, and of eight-tenths of the mucilage, which experience has taught us to place in the rank of heterogeneous particles. This substance is divided in small loaves of sugar, to which, as I have already said, they give the name of *papelons*. They generally weigh three pounds, and are worth a real, whilst a pound of white sugar is worth a real and a half. The poor, who subsist principally on *papelon*, procure this precious necessary at a small expense, and habit causes them to prefer it to clayed sugar, which costs more than four times as much.

For the fabrication of the *guarapo*, of which I have spoken at the commencement of this article, the *papelon* is much the best, because it contains the principles of fermentation in a superior degree to the clayed sugar.

As to the little consistence which the sugar can acquire by the means which they employ, it is almost unimportant since the sugar is destined to be consumed on the spot as fast as manufactured; and not like the sugar of our colonies, to be transported across the sea, deposited in magazines in the mother coun-

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try, and perhaps afterwards to be sent to the north of Europe. It would therefore be useless, perhaps injurious to the interests of the planter of Terra-Firma, to deprive the sugar of a humidity, which augments its weight, and increases its proceeds.

It would not be surprising, however, if the manufacture of sugar should shortly undergo an advantageous reform in these provinces. The valuable work of M. Dutrone, on the history of the cane, and on the means of obtaining sugar in a greater quantity and of superior quality than by the ordinary process, is in the hands of several planters, who admire the principles it unfolds, and are only prevented from applying them by the difficulty of procuring the requisite utensils.

Tobacco.

A sixth article of produce in Terra-Firma, is tobacco. Its cultivation was at first free. Its commerce knew no other tie, no other shackle, no other enemy or oppressor, than the company of Guipuscoa. The culture of this plant, which the soil principally favoured, and which might be prosecuted on a large or small scale, and without costly utensils or expensive machines, was adapted, in every respect, to a people scattered, who had no other means of existing excepting by labour and perseverance.

Cultivated on the King's Account.

But the time arrived when the necessities of the state, and the expenses of the government of the pro-

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vinces dependent on Caraccas, obliged the king to draw from tobacco, the same fiscal resources which he had derived from it for a long time in the kingdoms of Mexico, Peru, and Santa-Fe. A cedule of June 22, 1777, reserved the exclusive vent of tobacco there, unless the planters preferred to redeem themselves therefrom, either by a poll-tax or by any other, of which the result would assure the king of an equivalent of 12 dollars per quintal. This occasions great disputes between the planters and the intendant; but as they relate entirely to finances, I reserve the details of them for the chapters destined for that subject, and in this will confine myself solely to the cultivation of tobacco.

The cedule which I have just cited, was executed in 1779. It severely prohibited all persons from sowing tobacco, and chose the places which were considered the most suitable in the different provinces, for cultivating and preparing tobacco on the king's account. Tatapa and Goaruto, in the valleys of Aragoa; Orituco, to the east of Calabozo; Varinas and Grita, at the south-west extremity of Venezuela; Cumanacoa and Tipure, in the province of Cumana; and Uspate, at Guiana, gained the preference.

In each of these places administrations were established, all subject to a director general of tobacco residing at Caraccas, with a salary of 4000 dollars. The first who occupied this employ, was Don Estevan de Leon. He obtained, in 1793, the office of intendant; under the obligation which he imposed upon himself, of discharging *gratis* the functions of director of tobacco. In the month of January, 1803, he

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was superseded by Don Dionisio Franco, one of the subjects of Spain, who best knew the interests of his country.

The persons employed in these administrations distribute allotments of the land destined to the culture of tobacco, to such as apply for them. The quantity is proportioned to the abilities of the grantee, and to the number of cultivators which he engages to employ. They even make him cautious advances of money, which they deduct from the amount of the first tobacco which he delivers to the king. He is enjoined to sow all the land given him, with tobacco, and forbidden to employ it in any other species of cultivation. He must deliver to the king all the tobacco which he raises, without retaining a single leaf, and he is paid according to its quality. The culture and preparation of tobacco does not require fatiguing labour, but great care: the least negligence in the weeding and other proceedings which will be detailed, occasions the loss of the crop.

Nurseries of Tobacco.

Tobacco requires a fat and humid soil. Oritucò has sand mingled with the mould, and produces the best tobacco. It would reproduce itself from its seed; but, in the plantations of the king, they establish nurseries which demand a rich soil where the water does not settle and stagnate; for the seeds would rot instead of sprouting.

The time chosen for sowing, is from the month of August until in November. The first care is to pre-

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vent, by good inclosures, animals from entering the nurseries. After having finished sowing, they water the earth, and this operation is repeated as often as the want of rain renders it necessary. The weeds which spring up at the same time with the tobacco are very injurious to it; they are pulled up by hand, taking care not to affect the young plant. It is often necessary to sow all the land a second time; but they are always obliged to scatter new seed in the parts where the plant has made its appearance. It is very rare that the first sowing does not leave large spaces unproductive. At the end of forty or fifty days the tobacco is to be transplanted.

Planting.

In the mean time the land destined to be planted, is prepared. It is broken in a sufficient degree that the rains may easily dissolve the salts, provoke fermentation, and make the tobacco shoot forth handsome sprigs and long roots. When the moment of planting is arrived, the young plant is taken up with all possible caution, particularly guarding it in its transportation against the ardour of the sun, and against being bruised. If the weather is dry, it is adviseable to water the nursery the evening before, that the young plants may be more cool and fresh when taken up, and more disposed for the new germination.

The tobacco is planted in lines, three feet and a half distant from each other. The holes are made at two feet distant in high ground, and at one and a half in the plains. They should be made two days before

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the planting; because, in this interval, all injurious particles have time to exhale, and the rain deposits the moisture necessary to fertilization.

The plant should be placed in the hole with great precaution. Care should be taken, not only against damaging its tender roots, but also, that the soil which clings to them should also be detached in taking up. All hard clods of earth which might injure the young plant, are removed, and the hole is closed up in such a manner as to prevent the water from settling there. Without this attention the tobacco plant would perish.

It is adviseable to cover the plant with a banana leaf, or something similar; by this means the tobacco is protected from the heat of the sun, and from the heavy rains, which would not prove less prejudicial. Four days afterwards it is uncovered to replace such plants as through the fault of the planter, or any other cause, may not have taken root. The planting may take place at any time of day, provided the weather be overcast, otherwise it should only be done in the morning or evening.

Weeding.

After all these precautions, the plantation must be weeded as often as the quantity of weeds renders it necessary. Nothing tends more to the thriving of the tobacco than to keep it clean and unembarrassed. As oon as the young plant has acquired a certain size and substance, it seeks to free itself from its first leaves, which themselves announce, by their wither-

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ing, that they are injurious to the plant Nature demands in this case, to be assisted by the hand of the cultivator.

Tobacco Vermin.

From its most tender age the tobacco is attacked by several species of worms. It would inevitably perish if man did not defend it against its destroyers. As each of these worms makes its ravages in a different manner, the first measure to prevent them, is to study well their characters and movements. The drooping of the plant intimates that it is attacked by the worms called *canne*. They lodge themselves in the summit of the stem, and are found on opening the leaves thereof. All that part of the stem damaged by the worms, is cut away close to the healthy part. It then puts forth a new bud, which, with care, forms a passable tobacco plant.

The rosca worm makes it attacks only in the night. In the day it hides itself in the ground. A bed of prickles placed about the tobacco plant, is the best trap that can be set for them.

It is believed that the insect to which the people of the country give the name of *punaise volante*, injures the tobacco by a kind of corrosive transpiration, which it deposits on the plant. The tobacco is seen to decay insensibly, and does not revive, until relieved from its enemy.

There is a species of butterfly, called by the Spaniards of the country, *palometa*, which makes great

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havoc in the tobacco. It escapes with activity during the heat of the day, but the dampness of the morning benumbs it, and it is easily killed.

The grub (*puceron*) is almost imperceptible; it perforates the bud, and destroys the plant.

A species of scarab, called, in the country, *arador*, enters the ground, and feeds on the roots of the tobacco, which it occasions speedily to perish.

But there is no insect from which the tobacco has so much to apprehend as the horned worm (*ver a corne.*) It requires but one night to devour a leaf of tobacco, whatever may be its size.

The catalogue of worms destructive to tobacco might be considerably augmented; but I believe I have mentioned sufficient to give an idea of the vigilance which this plant exacts from the cultivator.

Increase of the Tobacco Plant.

The plant soon springs up and forms on the summit a bud, towards which the sap would direct itself if a remedy was not applied. The means employed with success, is to cut off the bud. The plant is then one foot and a half in height. This operation is repeated when it has attained three feet. There are some who repeat it three times, but this is rare. At the same time they cut all the sprouts and all the branches which draw off the nutritive substance of the leaves. Experience has proved that the branches or sprouts which shoot from the stem, render the tobacco bitter and retard its harvest.

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Signs of its Maturity.

In consequence of these operations the tobacco becomes bushy, and acquires by degrees a colour between blue and green, a sign of the approach of its maturity. It is known to be ripe by a small bluish spot which forms itself at the point where the leaf joins to the stem; this commonly takes place in December.

All the leaves do not ripen at the same time, because the sap is not equally distributed throughout the plant. Those leaves only are gathered of which the colour indicates their maturity. The others have not yet the essential juice, and would only yield tobacco without flavour. The gathering is continued and repeated as the leaves ripen.

Precautions in gathering.

It is highly important to the quality of tobacco, that it should not be gathered except when the sun is in full force above the horizon; for the dews or any other humidity would by fermentation injure its constituent principles, and would render ineffective the benefits which it had already received from nature, and those which it might expect from a methodical preparation.

As the ripe leaves are gathered they are placed in heaps from twenty to twenty-five, between the ranges of the plants. The labourers collect them, arrange them on mats, cover them to protect them

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from the sun, and in this manner transport them to the manufactury.

The Spaniards of Terra-Firma give their tobacco two kinds of preparation, one they term *cura seca*, or the dry preparation; the other *cura negra*, or black preparation. The only difference consists in the degree of fermentation given to the tobacco, submitted to the process of the black preparation. Its object is to obtain therefrom a juice highly esteemed in the country. This operation blackens the tobacco. It is this which gives the name of black to this mode of curing.

Dry Preparation, or Cura Seca.

As soon as the tobacco arrives from the fields at the houses assigned for its preparation, it is divided into small parcels, which are placed in the shade until the next day.

At the end of twenty-four hours they hang under sheds and on bars, the leaves of tobacco, two and two, if in winter, or four and four if in summer. This is done to make the tobacco lose, by the action of the air, its tention and green colour, to acquire instead a yellowness and softness which render it more flexible. In rainy weather it must remain three days in the situation, and sometimes four; but if the weather is dry, two days are sufficient.

As soon as the tobacco has obtained the colour and softness of which I have spoken, it is taken down without being piled up, lest is should ferment; they then take out the stalk, from the point, until within

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four inches of the part where the leaf was united to the stem. This is done with the fingers, and with the caution necessary to prevent the leaf from being damaged. The leaves which have undergone this process are laid on one side, and the damaged tobacco and the stalks on the other, without putting them in heaps, because there is still danger of their heating or fermenting.

At the same time they make cords or twists of these leaves which they divide into balls of seventy-five pounds, which, after the process of preparation, diminish into twenty-five pounds. All this requires great celerity, because the leaves may dry, and consequently it would be more difficult to take out the stalk and to twist them. Thus, therefore, if the operation is retarded or delayed, it will be fortunate if the tobacco turns out even of the second quality.

The interior of the cord is made, like segars, of broken or damaged leaves, which are covered with a good leaf. As soon as the ball is of the proper size, it is made anew, so that the outward end becomes the centre of the new ball. This is done to prevent it from untwisting.

The balls of tobacco are then placed on beds or layers of a foot thick, formed of the branches or stalks, covered with the damaged tobacco. A covering of the branches is likewise spread over the balls, and kept down by weights or skins. All this should be done in the shade and under sheds; for it is necessary to guard against the sun and the rain.

The tobacco is suffered to ferment for forty-eight hours, if it was too dry when the large stalk was taken

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out; but only twenty hours if it was at its proper point; it is afterwards rolled anew, so that what was on the exterior becomes the centre; and at the same time it is highly moistened to prevent fermentation. The balls are then returned to their former place to ferment, and in this state they are left for twenty-four hours, if the first time they were suffered to ferment forty-eight, and *vice versa*.

When it is judged that the balls of tobacco have sufficiently fermented, they are exposed to the air, until they become cold; they are wound over morning and evening for three or four days. By this process, more or less repeated, the visible defects of the tobacco are corrected. It is entirely exempt from them if its colour is blackish, its juice viscid, and its smell agreeable.

Lastly, the balls are unrolled, and the tobacco put in manoques* which are suspended in the shade and separated, that the tobacco may lose its superfluous humidity, and acquire that colour which influences its value in commerce. If the weather be too damp, it is necessary to light a fire beneath the suspended tobacco, or to place there such materials as will yield a thick smoke.

It is difficult to assign the exact period of time which the tobacco should remain in this state. That depends on the temperature, on the greater or less proportion of fat particles which it contains, and on the nature of the precautions observed in its preparation. It is known by opening the cord and squeezing it. If the juice run freely the tobacco

* *Manoque de tabac*, a long roll of tobacco, called also a *carret*.

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is not sufficiently dry, but it generally dries in forty or fifty days.

In some manufacturies they put the tobacco at first in manoques and suspend them in the air.—When they judge that is is sufficiently dry, they bring the manoques together, so that by the contact, which endures for several hours, the juice of the plant concentrates. All superfluous humidity being dissipated, they profit of such time of the morning, or of a cloudy day, when the cord is most flexible, to tie the manoque to four points at equal distances. This is done with strips of the bark of the banana so as not to break the tobacco. They then place the manoques in heaps, which they arrange on a bed of dry banana leaves of the height of nearly two feet. They cover the heap with the same banana leaves on which they place weights which press down the mass.

At the end of eight days they uncover it, to inspect the state of the fermentation; if it is too considerable, they suspend the manoques anew in a place sheltered, but airy, where they remain until the fault of excessive fermentation is visibly corrected. If the fermentation is at the point desired, they form a new heap in an inverted order, and with the same precautions. Fifteen days afterwards they examine the fermentation to invert the heap once more; it remains in this new state fifteen days, as in the preceding instances.

The humidity of the atmosphere occasions sometimes an interruption to the order of these operations, or requires that much greater attention should be shown to the process of the fermentation, in order

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to preserve the tobacco from corruption. Each time that the heap is made over, care should be had that the cord does not slacken, nor the manoques open.

All the operation being finished, the heap is made anew for the last time. The manoques are detached, the cords of tobacco extended at full length in a magazine slightly watered, the ground of which is covered with fresh banana leaves, which are likewise sprinkled, or which have been rendered humid by the dew. The first layer of tobacco being made, it is covered with similar leaves, and new layers are successively formed, until the whole of the tobacco is thus heaped up. Then a strong layer of banana leaves is spread above, which is kept down by weights, and sometimes a little water is added, if there is any apprehension that the tobacco is too dry.

It remains in this situation four days. The manufacturer then untwists the cord and ascertains the quality of the tobacco. He separates the pieces of an inferior quality, and makes them into balls of twenty-five pounds. The tobacco of the first quality receives the same form; and both the one and the other are placed in magazines.

Preparation of Black Tobacco, or Cura Negra.

All the measures which I have just mentioned, have for their object, merely the preparation of tobacco *cura seca*. Those which are employed for the *cura negra* differ in some few particulars. The first fermentation of the tobacco, when in balls, is made in the sun,

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under a layer of green herbage, which is charged with weights to augment the compression. After three days the covering is removed, and a thick vapour is emitted. The balls are returned after being wound over, and they undergo a second, third and fourth fermentation, until the colour of the tobacco evinces that it should be placed in the shade. When this is done, the balls are made anew, and a weight is placed on each of them, which presses therefrom a liquor, which is received in appropriate vessels.—The balls are once more wound outside in, and submittted to the same process, and they emit the same liquid, known in the country by the name of *moo* and *chimoo*.

The rest of the preparation of this tobacco is nearly the same as that of the dry tobacco, which has already been described.

The liquid which is expressed from the tobacco is not suffered to remain in that state. It is boiled to the consistence of a syrup. It becomes, by this means, an object of great consumption among the planters of the interior of Terra-Firma, principally in the part of Varinas. The women have a small box, which they wear like a watch, suspended to one side, at the end of a string. Instead of a key, it is furnished with a little spoon, with which they help themselves from time to time of this juice, relishing it in their mouths like a sweetmeat. This corresponds to the chewing of tobacco among our sailors.

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Mode in which the King pays the Cultivators for the Tobacco.

The tobacco is paid for by the king to those who undertake its cultivation, according to its quality. The tobacco, is first divided into *cura seca* and *cura negra*, and each of those two species is sub-divided into three qualities, of which the prices are very different. In the manner of classing them great abuses and injustice have taken place, which the law has never been able to prevent. The wise, but ineffectual regulation, which prescribed the forms to be observed in the delivery, reception, weight and qualities of tobacco, is of the 2d of June, 1787.

According to this regulation it should all be done in the presence of the factor, the book-keeper, the administrator of the magazines, the visitor or inspector, the cultivator and the commissary general of the plantations.

The inspector classes the tobacco, and he must not be impeded or interrupted in the discharge of his duty. If the cultivator is not content, he appeals to the assistants, who cannot change any thing, unless unanimously. If they are divided in opinion, they nominate persons experienced in the business to decide.

Notwithstanding that the tobacco may not have all the qualities requisite to preserve it for a length of time, yet it must be received according to its state and value, provided its corruption may be retarded five or six months.

The tobacco is weighed in the presence of the members of this assembly, and the steelyard is held

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by one of the guards nominated by the administration. Two invoices are made of it, signed by all the assistants. One of them remains at the factory, and the other is consigned to the commissary general of the plantations.

After all these formalities, the cultivator of the tobacco is paid at the following rates:

For a quintal of tobacco, cura negra.

First quality.	11 *Dollars*
Second quality, ...	10
Third quality, ...	7

For the cura seca.

First quality, ...	10 *Dollars.*
Second quality, ...	8
Third quality, ...	3

Reflections on the Cultivation of Terra-Firma.

It is a matter of astonishment that, in the most beautiful country in nature, where every thing concurs to promote luxuriance of vegetation, the plantations should be so inconsiderable in magnitude.—A planter whose income amounts to four or five thousand dollars is considered rich. There cannot be enumerated twenty plantations in all the province of Caraccas which produce a greater revenue. It is not, however, that the property is too much divided. It is rare to see a plantation of which one tenth part of its extent is cultivated. It is a cheerless and painful sight to behold the labour of three successive centuries crowned with such pitiful results. On a soil two hundred times less spacious, incomparably less watered and less fertile, and with not more than

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one half the white population, the French have succeeded in raising at St. Domingo, ten times more produce than is raised at this day in the vast provinces of Caraccas.

First Cause of its Decline.

What are the causes which have produced such striking effects? The first that presents is, the mass of mortgages with which every estate in Terra-Firma is more or less burthened. There are so few houses, plantations, &c. which are not oppressed by the *censos*, or obligations to pay interest on the capitals mortgaged on them, that their scanty number is too inconsiderable to constitute an exception.

It is the custom of the Spaniards not to alienate any property. They may be poor, but they must appear rich. If they are in want of money, they will borrow it on their fast property, and agree to pay five per cent interest. These kinds of loans are the more easy, because the want of stir in commercial affairs, leaves money at a low rate there. The best real property will scarcely yield four or five per cent: five per cent, therefore, on his money, is a clear gain to the lender; it is natural, then, that he who has funds is equally eager to lend, as he who is in want is to borrow.

Second Cause.

The pious legacies and the prebends, which augment from generation to generation, instead of being

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extinguished by payment of the capitals, oblige the planter to pay regular interest, and consequently deprive him of the means of increasing his productions. It would be a thousand times more advantageous for the public prosperity, if all the pious donations were discharged in toto, even though it were expedient to sell all, or part, of the fast property, rather than suffer them to accumulate on the possessions, the annual interests of which consume their revenues, and paralyse the industry of the most active proprietor.

The income tax of five per cent paid to the king for the duty of the alcavala, and the tythes, are not by any means as detrimental to the progress of cultivation as the mortgages, because they are only levied on the proceeds, and are proportioned to their progression; whereas the interests of the mortgages are always the same, whether the year be abundant or sterile.

Adverse seasons which destroy two or three crops successively, ruins for ever a planter who is burthened with mortgages, however laborious he may be. The expenses continually augment the magnitude of the debt; chagrin overcomes all his industrious inclinations; his property is sequestrated, and passes, under the form of a sale, and at the same charges, to another planter, who is menaced with the same fate. Thus, all conspire against the increase of cultures, because they offer no benefits eventually, excepting to advocates and attornies.

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Third Cause.

Another obstacle to cultivation, greater if possible than those just mentioned, presents itself in the manner in which the Spaniards regulate their plantations. Their principal and habitual residence is in the cities. Every proprietor has his house and residence there. The furnishing of it, the number of domestics, and expences, are regulated according to the revenue of the plantation, which is generally calculated on the proceeds of the most fertile and prosperous year. It is consequently rare that the expenditures do not exceed the receipts, and that instead of economising, for the sake of improving the cultivation, they involve themselves in debt, and accuse the intemperateness of the seasons, and the imperfection of the laws, rather than their own want of order and discretion.

The Spaniard who visits his plantation once a year, thinks he has done a vast deal towards making his fortune, and he often takes no notice of the labours going on there. I recollect my demanding one day of a Spanish doctor, who returned from residing two months on his sugar plantation, if the weather was favourable to vegetation; if the sugar made a good appearance, in a word, if all answered his wishes.—He answered with a disdainful smile, that all these details were under the jurisdiction of his overseer; and those who were present immediately took up the subject to assure me seriously, that the doctor went to his plantation only for his pleasure, and not for his interest; to enjoy the purity of the air, and not

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to overlook the management of his property. It cost me a prompt and a serious apology. I remained confused to have offended a Spanish planter with questions which would have flattered a French planter of the highest order. A country where more honour is not paid to agriculture is unworthy of the favours of nature.

Fourth Cause.

The management of plantations in Terra-Firma is confined to negroes, mulattos, and sometimes to whites of the Canaries: but never to creoles, who prefer the indolence of the cloisters, the attractions of the epaulette, or the labyrinth of chicanery, to the noble labours of the country. Employments are the great and sole objects of ambition to the Spanish American. Whatever riches may be insured to him by the best soil in the world, yet he still rests short of his desires, unless he has a military rank, a place in the finances, a judiciary office, or the cross of an order. He wastes his life and lavishes his fortune in obtaining ranks and employs, and in soliciting new ones.—Every Spaniard *honorado*, who is above the commonalty, has his empowered agent at Madrid. He is ever ready, at the order of his constituent, to collect, at the offices, all necessary information; and according to circumstances, he acts without waiting for the orders of his client, and solicits such place or appointment as he thinks will be suitable for him. The solicitor, however, does not take a single step, nor speak a single word, unless the money, already de-

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posited at Madrid, pays him well for his labours, and often even for those which he has not taken.—There is not a Spaniard, moreover, who does not consider a remittance of money to Madrid, as a preliminary condition of the success of every solicitation. There are daily instances of planters who mortgage their plantations for the purpose of effecting these remittances, and who thus dry up the source of their landed riches, to succeed in that which springs from favour. It is difficult for men, thus thirsting after prerogatives, to deliver themselves entirely to the study of productive nature; to renounce the ambition of those distinctions, after which all their countrymen are sighing, and to content themselves with the simple title of cultivator, to which nobody attaches any consideration.

A strong proof that all men have a common stamp, is, that we had planters in our colonies, who equalled the Spaniards in their mania for distinctions. But it is equally true, that the plantation always resented the vanity of its owner, and the contempt which he evinced for it.

By the character of the overseers employed, we may judge of the multiplied defects in the management of a plantation. Neither emulation nor intelligence are esteemed in these administrations. To obtain passable productions, it is necessary that the fertility of soil should atone for the evils of the ignorance which presides over their culture and preparation.—With a similar system, our colonies would not furnish the tenth part of what they at present produce.

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If any one would wish a proof of the advantages resulting to produce, from the residence of planters on their property, let him cast his eyes on the plantations which prosper, on those which remain unchanged, and on those which fall into decay; he will find that the first are conducted by proprietors, whose whole ambition is to increase their revenues, and who pride themselves on being cultivators; the greater part of these men are Biscayans. The second appertain to Spaniards, who divide their time between the city and the country, and who superintend the labours while they are on their property, and direct such as must be performed during their absence. The Plantations which decline, belong invariably to persons who only visit them as strangers, who disdain the information necessary to a planter, who seek after favours and employs, or who are dissipated and extravagant.

Fifth Cause.

The fifth and last cause of the decline of culture, and which has contributed most to diminish, in an alarming manner, the productions of Terra-Firma is, the faultof not introducing negroes. The Spaniards, as I have observed in Chap. III. Article *Slaves*, have never been allowed their direct importation. They were permitted to purchase them in the Antilles, to pay for them in the produce of the country, excepting in cacao, and to resell them at Terra-Firma: the law even afforded particular favours to this branch of commerce.

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The revolt of the blacks of the French colonies took place in 1791; all were on the brink of being lost. St. Domingo, the richest and most brilliant of all the colonies of the world, became the theatre of carnage and devastation. All the disorganizing elements seemed to dispute the glory of hastening its entire destruction. The slave no longer beheld in the master any other than a victim, and the master no longer found in the slave any other than an executioner. Flames annihilated the possessions, while the Africans, or the descendants of Africans, bathed themselves in the blood of every one who had the appearance of white. A spectacle so terrible was naturally a cause of affright to Terra-Firma. They considered it as dangerous to public tranquillity to augment the number of blacks; and besides, the war rendered the importation of them more difficult. No one purchased any more of them, either in the Antilles or at Terra-Firma. Twelve years elapsed without the arrival of a single negro.

In the mean time agriculture demanded hands, the labours of the country languished, the mass of productions diminished; but prudence demanded precautions. The intendant, Juan Vicente de Arce, conciliated these extremes, in forbidding, by his decree of May 12, 1803, the introduction of negroes, coming from strange colonies; which was the more prudent because, leaving this commerce, which had become more critical, in the hands of strangers, avarice might excite them to buy in the French colonies, negro prisoners who would carry to Terra-Firma the seeds of revolt. The intendant, for the

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furnishing of the provinces left only the execution of a permission given by the king to Edward Barry and company for the introduction of four thousand negroes; but the grantee being dead, the operation was arrested, and only particular permissions were given. Two merchants, in May, 1804, obtained two of these permissions, each amounting to fifteen hundred negroes. In this manner the introducers of blacks are known, and can be made answerable for any irregularity in their mode of proceeding.

But this measure is still very insufficient for a country where there is not the twentieth part of the population necessary for its cultivation; for a country where the births of slaves are far from supplying the vacancies made by their deaths; where the benevolence and piety of the masters annually draw a considerable number of individuals from the class of slaves, to render them free, who thenceforward become useless to agriculture and a charge to society.

It appears impossible to remove these evils, which menace this country with a slow but infallible dissolution, except by facilitating the introduction of blacks. But circumstances make it necessary that this measure should not be adopted but with the greatest precautions.

This object has become a point of political economy capable of fixing all the attention of the legislator, and all the vigilance of the government. To refuse the reception of negroes would appear absurd, until the number of slaves equalled that of the free population, and not to deliver the local regulation of

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blacks to a severe and guardian police, would be to jeopardize the public tranquillity.

Reason, humanity and policy permit the employment, for the safety of these provinces, of another measure, which is wanting in all the other European possessions in the gulph of Mexico; it is that of employing in agriculture the idle hands of free men of colour, and of the Indians of *doctrinaries* and missions. The Canaries, the youth of which have a decided taste for America, might also furnish Terra-Firma with useful and laborious men. It rests with the wise combination of the laws, and with the zeal of the magistrates, to proceed on this measure, and to devote themselves seriously to the grand work of leading the provinces to that degree of prosperity for which they were designed by nature. The salaries of workmen should be punctually paid, their emulation excited, and activity should succeed to idleness.

Means of encouraging Agriculture.

It would be unjust to deny that the laws might be more advantageous to agriculture than they have been, and than they are. I will remark, as their first defect, that they do not give public respectability to the cultivator; they do not render agriculture the most honourable and most favoured occupation.

The talent of a legislator consists in directing for the public good, the opinions, prejudices and even passions of the citizen: as therefore the Spaniards have in general, a religious respect for every thing that is in representation, it appears to me that agriculture

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would derive much benefit from this national bias, if a chamber of agriculture were established in the chief city of each government; the number of members being in proportion to the population of the province.

Every thing relative to agriculture might be referred to this chamber, which should hold its sessions twice a week. It should be incessantly occupied in expedients to simplify labour, by the use of suitable machines, to put all the idle hands of the country in employ, to perfect the manufacture and preparation of produce, &c. This chamber might be invested with power to decide, without delay or expense, all disputes relative to the watering of lands, the damages committed by animals on neighbouring plantations, the payment of wages to workmen, the bad treatment of slaves, &c.

All these causes though summary by nature, pass at present through the circuitous and ruinous windings of judicial formalities, and obtain that solemnity of attention to which the most complicated cases have, among other nations an exclusive right. Will it be credited, that if the cognizance of these affairs were taken from the royal audience of Caraccas, its roll of causes would be reduced more than half?—This alone proves the advantage that would result to public prosperity from this reform. It would at one blow restore to agriculture a moiety of the immense sums at present divided, under denomination of expenses, among notaries, advocates, attornies, &c.

If the utility of establishing chambers of agriculture is admitted, justice and good policy require

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that the gratuitous service exacted from them, should be rewarded with prerogative, honours, and precedency.

The first members should be nominated by the governor, and his choice should be regulated by the morals, intelligence, and love of labour in the individual. Half of the chamber should be changed every year, in such manner that, after the first year, every member should continue two years in office. The moiety departing should be replaced by ballot of the whole chamber, from a list of candidates, at the head of which those cultivators should be placed, who during the course of the year had made useful discoveries, or presented memoirs of merit, on the art of cultivating or preparing produce. The members whose times expired, should not be eligible to re-election during two years; for it is necessary to prevent this chamber from becoming the exclusive appendage of a small circle of men. The noble, the white plebeian, the military man, the lawyer and the priest, should be equally eligible. Nothing should exclude but colour and the want of possessions, cultivated in commercial produce. Every election to be submitted to the approbation of the governor.

The quality of a member of the chamber of agriculture, should be taken in all public and private acts, as an honourable title, to which should be attached the qualification of *seigneurie**.

The members, after the expiration of their office, should retain, during life, the title of ex-member of the chamber of agriculture; but the title of *seigneurie*

* Equivalent to the title of his honour, his worship, &c.

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should be limited to the time of holding the station. They should have, during life, a right of sitting in the chamber.

In public ceremonies, the chamber of agriculture should take rank next to the audience. A particular and ornamented station should be reserved for them in the principal church. It should be exclusively occupied by them; and the members might take their seats in it, either individually or in a body.

On the days of compliment, *besamanos*, the chamber of agriculture should be first admitted to compliment the governor, in cities containing neither an audience nor a bishop; and the governor immediately after receiving the compliment of the chamber, should send two deputies to return the courtesy.

The secretary should hold his office for life, and with appointments for an honourable maintenance. In large cities, it could not be less than 3000 dollars. But the establishment of chambers of agriculture could not accomplish the great object proposed, if they did not possess the means of disseminating information by correspondence, by memoirs submitted to their judgment, and by the publication of experiments advantageous to agriculture. For this purpose, a printing-press is requisite. By that alone, can a general system, founded on good principles, be prepared from the various methods employed to obtain commercial produce. In the present state of things, no planter profits by the experience of his neighbour, or communicates his own. On the contrary, a selfish principle induces each to conceal from all others, any discovery that chance has disclosed

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to him. He seeks the profit of it alone, because he would derive no credit from divulging his secret. But, then, in detailing it to the chamber of agriculture, he would receive the flattering compliment of public thanks, so gratifying to the pride of every man. The ensuing publication by the chamber, announcing the discovery, and naming the author, would become an honourable monument, which would render dear to succeeding generations the memory of him, who had the happiness of being useful to his fellow-citizens.

This is a suitable moment to speak of the difficulties which have been experienced in attempts to establish a printing-press at Caraccas. The consulate, convinced of the great advantages offered by typography to cultivation and commerce, requested permission from the king, to establish a printer at Caraccas, under the same regulations and superintendance with those of Havanna, Santa-Fe, Lima, Mexico, &c. An absolute refusal was returned in 1803. The Spanish government apprehended that the insurrection of 1797, was not perfectly extinguished, and that the seditious, availing themselves of the facility to print their projects, might thus give a bias to public opinion, fatal to the Spanish sovereignty.

My residence in the capital of Venezuela, has enabled me to ascertain sufficiently the disposition of the people, to be convinced that these fears are chimerical and injurious to the inhabitants of that great city.

While there are lucrative posts in the different branches of administration, civil, military and reli-

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gious; and while the nomination of all these employs rests with the king, it will require efforts, far superior to those of Spanish energy, to endanger the royal authority in the slightest degree. Every Spaniard is solicitous of office. He whose wealth does not require the addition of official revenue, is ambitious of honours, crosses, and Castilian titles, such as marquis, count, baron; and it is from the king alone that he can hope for these gratifications. Assuredly, a press at Caraccas, whatever license might be given to it, would be far from having the ability of affecting this state of affairs. What danger then could possibly result, when it would be subjected to inspection and censure? Those who create phantoms have always terrifying objects before them. In seeing evil on every side, it is impossible ever to act correctly. Prudence, it is true, enjoins precaution, but excessive precaution is only dictated by pusillanimity, or by that terror which banishes reason. Charles VII. through apprehension of poison, abstained from eating. He hastened death through the fear of dying.

Besides the great objects of utility already described, a printing-press at Caraccas, would offer others not less important. A weekly gazette might be filled with all sorts of advertisements, which would supply the want of communication between the citizens. It often happens that one neighbour is desirous to sell effects, which another is solicitous to purchase; but, through want of the requisite knowledge, both are deprived of the opportunity. A merchant has frequently articles in his store, which are wanted in the city, or which he can sell below the ordinary price:

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but the circumstance is not known, and the articles remain unsold. A proprietor wishes to sell, hire, or farm out his plantation, his house, his slaves—years pass away without his finding an opportunity, because his intention is unknown. By means of a periodical paper, every person would know all that was important for his convenience in the province, and could make known whatever he might offer to that of others.

Government for all its measures; the royal audience for its regulations; the archbishop for his mandates; the university for its acts; the college for its notices; the intendant for his arrangements; the consulate for commerce; even religion, for its exercises and prayers, would find, in the printing-house, means of multiplying, so promptly and at such little expense, copies of every thing destined for the public eye, that it is hardly possible such an establishment should hereafter encounter new obstacles to its formation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars.

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